

MARVEL

No.73 • SCIENCE FICTION • HORROR • FANTASY • ANIMATION • SPFX • 95p

STARBURST

NOT ALL VULCANS
LOOK LIKE
LEONARD NIMOY
—ROBIN CURTIS
AS LT SAAVIK

**STAR
TREK 3**
THE SEARCH
FOR SPOCK

INSIDE!
INTERVIEWS WITH
TREK STARS
WILLIAM SHATNER
DEFOREST KELLEY
GEORGE TAKEI
WALTER KOENIG
MARK LENARD

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

2010 THE LONG-AWAITED
SEQUEL TO 2001

DUNE THE EXTRAVAGANT ADAPTATION
OF THE FAMOUS BOOK

COMPANY OF WOLVES
—BRITISH SPFX FANTASY

THE END OF THE ENTERPRISE ?



FIND OUT-INSIDE



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Opinion

This Christmas sees the arrival of the long awaited Steven Spielberg production *Gremlins*. How the critics will react to the film after the recent reviews of *Indiana Jones* and the *Temple of Doom*, remains to be seen. Actually it doesn't really matter what the critics say, Spielberg nearly always cleans up at the box-office. Gone are the days when vitriolic super-critics could make or break a career for a film director. Never before has the phrase "sticks and stones etc, etc" been more true of Messrs Spielberg and Lucas. But does that mean that we can let the wielders of the poison pens get away with it? Certainly not!

What is most infuriating is that according to some critics, cinemagoers are morons, incapable of judging for themselves whether a film is good or not. But they should remember that it's the viewing public who are responsible for the success of films like *Raiders*, *Close Encounters* and now *Indiana Jones*, not a bunch of freeloaders who hardly ever put their hands in their pockets for a ticket at the box office, but instead, natter endlessly at free press screenings, over bowls of salted peanuts and glasses of thin white wine.

In *Time Out* magazine dated June 14-20th, Steven Spielberg and in particular, *Indiana Jones* came under attack from Geoff Andrew in a two-page article entitled *Boy's Own Brat*. Andrew is one of the best, he starts his deceptive piece of journalism by appearing to admire Spielberg. He then turns sour in the third paragraph, by warning us that *Indiana Jones* could be "A second instalment in what may turn out to be - heaven forbid! - an interminable series of adventures of the hero of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*". He even admits to making observations at the first *London* preview and how the audience, "loved it, surrendering happily to its expert manipulation of fear and release, hectic pace and sense of wonder".

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of his attack is that he feels that Spielberg and Lucas have become so caught up in the trappings of success, that they've forgotten what their movie is actually saying. Well... what is it saying? Ah yes, that there's a black magic cult in India ripping the still beating hearts out of its victims, subjecting hundreds of children to mid-twentieth-century slavery and warning of the dangers of pilotless air travel. What else can it say? It's not a tea-break in the *Garden of the Finzi-Contini*, and it's surely not necessary to add sub-titles as an explanation, is it?

Another criticism levelled at the film concerns the "hackneyed conception of the new film's heroine". Kate Capshaw is accused of being "wimpy", and an "hysterical stereotype". Granted, she may not have had the spunky heroics of Karen Allen, but for me that was a refreshing change, or are we to believe that all women on screen must be tough in order to keep the "male dominated world of Steven Spielberg's feverishly filmic imagination", in the right perspective?

By this point, Geoff Andrew is warning to his role as a self-appointed champion of underprivileged minorities. "Whatever one may expect from a comic-adventure, the tone is frankly racist". Good grief, the film is no more racist in its depiction of an Indian Village in the Thirties than the similar scenes in *Gandhi*. Racial hatred is a nasty component of human nature and by attempting to label the film for the sake of a point of view is, I think, rather petty and somewhat unnecessary.

"But it's depressing to see how naive and shallow his (Spielberg) attitude is towards what kids want and need. Of course they want excitement, but kick out the reactionary comic-strip stereotypes". Okay, true, that is all you hear the kids saying outside the Empire Leicester Square, as they leave the theatre clutching their sweets and souvenir books, "Kick out the reactionary comic-strip stereotypes," they chorus.

E.T. is attacked because as Andrew states, it shows that Spielberg is a "man out of touch with both the joys and unpleasanties of modern life". Thank goodness for that, if it means that the reason people are going to the cinema is to escape from reality. Cinemagoers have been doing that for decades and so it's not a trend that can be blamed on Spielberg. Perhaps to the *Time Out* staff, a movie is only acceptable if it's 8 hours long, contains Hungarian sub-titles and is only available for viewing at the *National Film Theatre*. I can't see that showing emotion in a film about a "grotesquely distorted garden gnome" is any more debasing than shedding a few tears in the final reel of *Casablanca*.

Criticising Spielberg as having watched too many movies without relating them to real life, Andrew shows, as many of Spielberg's recent critics, a total lack of understanding of what film means to the majority of cinemagoers. It is still a form of entertainment. If film needs to engage with the moral realities of modern life now and again, fair enough, there will be plenty of pictures around doing just that, but will they keep the cinemas open? Film is a too powerful and valuable a medium to be wasted, and without the Spielberg's of this world there may soon be no screens left to waste it on.

Richard Holliss

CONTENTS

STARBURST LETTERS 4

Our readers write on the Indiana Jones censor cuts, David Cronenberg's *The Dead Zone* and obscure fantasy tv shows.

THINGS TO COME 6

Our globetrotting gatherer of good tidings Tony Crawley logs in with another fantasy bulletin.

PREVIEW: 2010 8

At last! The long-awaited sequel to one of the most famous science fiction films of all.



TVZONE 14

Richard Holliss' regular monthly look at fantasy in television.

FUTUREKILL 16

We interview Ron Moore, debuting film director, about his low-budget action movie.

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE 18

John Brosnan casts his rheumy eye over Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom!



THE STAR TREK INTERVIEWS 10

Starburst presents an informal chat with George Takei, Walter Koenig and Mark Leonard, Trekkers all.

PREVIEW: DUNE 12

The epic adaptation of Herbert's classic *Dune* novel is almost upon us — a miracle after the nightmare times in Mexico City during production.



COMPANY OF WOLVES 20

Starburst presents an early look at the magical SPFX on a new British fantasy movie.



THE STAR TREK INTERVIEWS 24

We talk to DeForest Kelley and William Shatner about the making of *Star Trek III*.

BLIND DATE 30

The Greek film director Nico Mastorakis explains how to make an international thriller on a domestic budget.

ITALIAN FANTASY 2 34

The second part of Alan Jones' directory to the fantasy film output of the Italian movie industry.

FILM REVIEWS 40

Starburst reviews *Supergirl*, *Romancing the Stone* and *Star Trek III*. Guess which comes off third best.



VIDEO FILE 42

Barry Forshaw's monthly look at what's happening in the uncharted waters of the video business.

BOOK WORLD 45

Chris Charles' consumer guide to what's new in fantasy books.

STARBURST DATA BANK 46

Starburst's ever-popular Sally Gary conjures up information on Lionel Atwill, composer Brian May and a whole pile of other fantastic trivia. So what do you want to know?

TEMPLE OF GLOOM

I have to confess that, when I left the Leicester Square theatre after seeing *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom*, it was with mixed feelings and a sense of disappointment.

The main problem, as I saw it, was that this eagerly awaited sequel to *Raiders* contained two different films working against one another. A bad George Lucas movie and a good Steven Spielberg one.

With regard to the Lucas angle, from the contrived spectacle of *Return of the Jedi* last year, it became quite apparent that the man's writing talents had well and truly gone to seed. Were it not for the technical wizardry employed in that film and the comfortable characterizations previously developed, it would have been in the same class as the miserable likes of *Spacehunter*. Much the same can be said of *Indiana Jones*. Where imagination, ingenuity and wry humour once dwelt in Lucas' writing now reside crassness, self-indulgence and pointless excess, a good deal of which is evidenced in the Shanghai section of the film.

Consider, for example, the scene where Indy and his pals jump out of the aeroplane in a rubber dinghy, ski down a mountain slope, drop from a huge precipice and tumble through a succession of rapids. As directed by Spielberg, it is an impressive, well-executed sequence which commands attention, but as a piece of writing it leaves a lot to be desired. It is an event that would not have been considered for *Raiders*, because that was a tightly-controlled film which derived most of its thrills from realistic and credible action scenes. I found myself thinking that not even Indy could survive such an extraordinary telescoping of accidents, despite ILM's concerted efforts to make me believe otherwise. It actually reminded me of that ugly moment in *Moonraker* when Richard Kiel managed to survive his skydiving escapade by landing on top of a circus tent.

In fact, when I think about it, the whole of the first half of the movie is reminiscent of a Roger Moore Bond film. Long, laboured comedy sequences punctuated by jokey action scenes and a few oddly anachronistic "serious" moments. Never have I seen the "icky foreign food" gag repeated so often in such a short space of time.

The formula approach was again emphasised when Indy and Co attempted to gain entry to the Temple through a chamber of creepy crawlies. The philosophy here was clearly: The spiders and snakes went down well in *Raiders*, let's give them more of the same.

Thereafter, thank goodness, the movie began to improve with Spielberg's talent for spectacle clearly exhibited in the Temple scenes. Unfortunately, it was also at this point that the British Board of Film Censors chose to

Starburst LETTERS

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step in and with symbolic irony, cut the heart out of the tremendously atmospheric Kali ceremony. In accordance with the new restrictions imposed by the Video Recordings Bill, gone were the vital scenes of a victim's consumption by the lava.

"Too terrifying for children," claimed a BBFC spokesman. Strange how they didn't make any fuss about the demise of the Nazis in *Raiders*. Evidently, the authorities felt that children exposed to the uncited rites of Kali will immediately run out and throw the first passerby into the nearest volcanic crater.

All this leads me to believe that it would be better for all concerned if the Spielberg/Lucas partnership were to come to an end before a joint disaster brings down the both of them.

Indy III? I can't say I'm too enthusiastic.

Graham Kennedy,
Camberley,
Surrey.

CUT!

I have just heard that the British Board of Film Censors (in all their wisdom!) have cut great chunks out of *Indiana Jones and The Temple of Doom* in order to grant it a PG cert. This was obviously done to allow all the kiddies who loved *Raiders of the Lost Ark* to see and love this one too. Being a general film buff and not just an Indiana Jones fanatic this annoys me greatly as it no doubt diminishes the effect of the film as a whole. If Spielberg and Lucas thought that these scenes weren't essential to the film then they themselves would have cut them out, and I know that I would much rather see this film as the makers intended it to be seen, and not as the British censors want us to.

Imagine if the Censors did this with every 15 or 18-rated film – what a state we'd be in then!

Thanks for listening.

Neil Roberts,
Caerphilly,
S. Wales.

KING OF THE HEAP

Seldom does a film live up to the expectations of the book but, in my opinion, David Cronenberg's version of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone* has gone one better – it surpasses the book.

Though it grieves me to say so, *The Dead Zone* have never been my favourite King novel. It lacked the scope and imagination of his others, most notably *The Stand*, nor did it contain the shocks we are used to from an author of King's calibre. In short, *The Dead Zone* novel was only good from a technical viewpoint, the juxtapositioning of three story-lines and its use of well rounded characterisation.

Cronenberg, by comparison, takes the best of King adds a few touches of his own (making Sarah part of Stillson's election campaign) and creates a far more lucid and entertaining plot.

People will no doubt criticise the Canadian for betraying his roots and leaving his, by now famous, gross-out special effects but for one welcome it. It is nice to see that Cronenberg can show restraint when he has to and maybe this will mark an end to the inane, self-indulgent ramblings that marred *Videodrome*. *The Dead Zone* maybe a little slow but the film is a far superior piece of work.

Direction aside, the greatest triumph of this particular opus into King-country must be its fine performances. Christopher Walken's Johnny Smith is the intelligent, unassuming everyman his name suggests, shunning a world that tries to use him and his new found powers of second sight. It is easy to identify with Smith and it can be no accident that numerous times throughout *The Dead Zone* we see him separated from the outside world, caught behind glass (the windows of cars and of his own house). His final demise, necessarily for the character, is not a full blown explosion of special effects but through the single shot of a pistol.

Brooke Adams and Herbert Lom give Walken admirable support as does Martin Sheen (once a Kennedy look-alike always a Kennedy look-alike) whose Senator Stillson was a remarkable blend of charismatic charm and all-consuming fanaticism.

Stephen King novels have, up until now, made notoriously bad movies. With the advent of Carpenter's *Christine* and Cronenberg's *The Dead Zone* let's hope this new trend for entertaining adaptations will be a mark of things to come.

Paul Butler,
Bisley,
Surrey.

VINTAGE TV

With the tv nostalgia boom still going strong, I wonder how many **Starburst** readers remember a series which has



Patrick McGeehan as The Prisoner congratulates a fellow villager.

stuck in my memory since I was a kid, called *The Adventures of Don Quick*.

It was one of the first series to be produced by London Weekend Television (probably some time around 1969-70), was shot on video and networked on Saturday nights, and starred Ian Hendry as Don Quick with Ronald Lacey as his sidekick Sam Cropanza. Basically a parody of the Don Quixote legend set in Outer Space, it suffered badly at the hands of the critics and lasted just one season - I remember it, however, as being quite clever and amusing; maybe it was just ahead of its time. The series included such delights as a giant dog cocking its leg against Don Quick's spaceship, Anoushka Hempel as an exotic alien in a string vest - and a very clever reworking of the famous Quixote "tilting at windmills" sequence (where Don Quixote mistook a number of giant windmills for monsters, and attacked them). In this particular episode, the inhabitants of a distant planet were terrified of huge, windmill-like structures and asked Don Quick to destroy them. Quick, however, explained that they were only windmills and weren't really dangerous at all. And in the final shot, as Don Quick's spaceship blasted off into space, the "windmills" slowly

began to advance towards the terror-stricken population. . .

Maybe Richard Holliss could do a TV Zone article about the series? I'd particularly like to know who was responsible for the scripts and the title music.

Another early LWT series which is long overdue for a repeat showing is *Tales of Unease*, a filmed anthology series of horror stories shot largely on location. The only episode I can recall in any detail told the story of a man trapped inside a modern office block in London, facing death at the hands of the computer which controls the air-conditioning, lifts, electricity and doors. Again, the title music for the series was very distinctive.

Shadows of Fear, an early videotaped series from Thames, was another anthology horror series which I used to enjoy. The title sequence consisted of a montage of bleak townscapes and truly haunting title music punctuated by the persistent hum of chattering voices. Apart from that, I can't remember a thing about it - except that the first episode starred Sheila Hancock as a mother terrified by her small son.

Fans of Brian Clemens may be interested to know that his ATV series

Thriller - the videotaped series which dealt with horror, witchcraft, murder and straightforward detective mysteries - has been turning up at various times on different ITV channels under the blanket title of *Late Night Thriller*. Some regional announcers mistakenly call them "films" or "TV movies", but of course they're not. People who remember Laurie Johnson's theme music (those jagged, jarring notes) and the "fish-eye" lens effect of the opening and end credits will be disappointed as I was to find that the original title sequences have been removed and replaced with abysmally low-standard title sequences produced in the United States - dull, muffled music (very bad sound quality), blurry film sequences (often creating a whole new "prologue" for the story, showing for example the hands and feet of a murderer - but never showing the face because the actor in the episode isn't the same as in the title sequence); and really amateurish graphics and chroma-key effects. The end credit graphics usually show a gaudy illustration (of the sort shown on cheap American paperbacks) showing different scenes from the story. I can only assume that the reason these episodes are being shown without the original title sequences is because ITC (it's that company again!) sold the series to the United States and we're now seeing repeats as they were presented for American audiences.

On the subject of ITC - I wrote both *ITC in London* and *Varese Sarabande Records in Hollywood*, California, enquiring about the possibility of them getting together to produce a commercial soundtrack from *The Prisoner* (I have since learned that a four-track EP is available from Six Of One, PO Box 61, Cirencester). In due course I received a very kind and helpful reply from Varese Sarabande, explaining that musicians' union fees would hinder the possibility of such a project but that they'd keep it in mind. At the time of writing I have yet to receive a reply from ITC, which seems fairly typical.

Graham Williams,
Mayhill,
Swansea.

Revenge of **FLICKERS** by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett

Scenes we'd like to see at the AWARD CEREMONIES...



Simple Surprise

First, as always, the year's big find at Cannes '84. As at the recent Dallas fest, the real knock 'em in the aisles surprise was a remarkably bloody murder-thriller called *Blood Simple*. Simple, it ain't. But don't ever miss it! That's an order! Shot in Texas about two years ago, the film's written and made by producer Ethan Coen and his director-brother, Joel. They're New York pals of Sam Raimi. It shows. They know their genres, do these siblings, deftly melding Hitchcock with Poe, and a liberal dollop of Argento. And judging by their casting, they're keen on Ridley and Tony Scott, too.

Blood Simple is an ultra-taut tale—by turn ghastly and hilarious—of a sleazy bar-keep hiring a demonic private detective to blow away his wife and her lover. He proves he's carried out this mission—only he hasn't. And on collecting his ten grand, he shoots hubby instead! When loverboy finds him, he presumes the wife has wasted her husband and proceeds to mop up the gallons of blood and bury him—alive, as it turns out. About then, the story really starts. . .!

Joel Coen shoots all this at skew-whiff angles, with dusky light, a solo piano score and scrupulous attention to every last detail. No cheapie, the film cost maybe five or six times John Sayles' newie and it's all up-front, on-screen, with an unknown, yet tremendous cast. The done-away-for hubby is played by *Hill Street Blues*' Dan Hedaya, seen at Cannes last year in *The Hunger* and just finishing Clint's *Tightrope*. The weasel 'tec is M. Emmett Walsh, (aka, Capt Bryant in *Blade Runner*). Tele-regular John Getz is the lover and judging by the fiery appeal of brand new Broadway find Fran McDormand, it's blood-simple to see why!

So: first Sam Raimi in 82, then Dick Maas in 83. Now the Coens. What we have here is a couple of extremely powerful new genre-ists. They blow away any critic's cynicism and will have you—but really!—on that famous Edge of your Seat. If not hiding out beneath it.

Copacetic Cannes

And so, here we are again. In sunny Cannes (not sunny for long) for the 37th festival devoted to the seventh art. And it was! The eight art (hyping) took something of a back seat. A vast improvement on the 36th fest, the films were suddenly, definitely more important and imposing this year. Celebrities were few—even if tele-soapers like Bobby Ewing and Fallon Carrington (no more, she says) and all manner of breakdancers were all over the place. They and the few bikini babes (not Edy Williams!) provided the photo-fodder for the media, while the rest of us

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Joe Morton plays the "Brother", an extraterrestrial who makes his way through Harlem, in a scene from John Sayles' new film, *The Brother From Another Planet*.



feasted on a veritable mascon of movies. (Yeah, I've been reading James Michener's *Space*, what you been doin'?) To use more of his NASA slangage, Cannes '84 was veritably copacetic. Sure it rained a lot. For me, it rained movies, 64 in 14 days... and bags of news. Like... Jennifer Beales, Ms Flashdance herself, is *The Bride of Frankenstein*, who else? In Sting's new movie, with a fellow named Clancy Brown as The Monster. As they're shooting here in France, and I've a date to meet them way down South again, I'd better get on with the rest of the Cannes news...

Strife of Brian

Change of plans for Britain's double-Oscar winning effects ace, Brian Johnson. He's still due to make his directing debut for Dieter Geissler, producer of *The Never Ending Story*, which Brian supplied the SPFX for. However, the debut won't be *Top Gear* any more. When Brian approached scenarist Steven Volk about scripting his film, the writer showed him another completed screenplay from his files. A swift read of *Telepathy*—about astronauts unsuccessfully searching for life in the galaxies until taking a telepathic space-jockey with them—and Brian changed course.

Assisted, naturally, by his British SPFX company, Fotherley, Brian starts shooting his well-earned break in October. "Working with directors like Stanley Kubrick is the best education in the world," he comments. "But time has come when I should put in my own thoughts beyond the special effects. I've had a few offers to direct but either I was none too keen on the projects or I wasn't sure I'd be too happy working with the people concerned." No problems, apparently, with Dieter Geissler—or co-producer Robert Gordon Edwards who's worked with Losey and Visconti in his time.

All Hail Sayles!

A local radio station overdid thing calling it "this year's E.T." but John Sayles had a whopping hit with his *Brother From Another Planet*. It's everything we want from John. Almost... Despite being about a black E.T. crash-landing smack in Harlem, in the very human shape of Joe Morton, it's not really sf. Just an achingly funny comedy of manners, mores and "trying to survive in an alien culture," says John. He prefers the fantasy tag "because there's almost no hardware used." Almost no money, either. John paid for it himself, \$340,000, shot it in four weeks with a miniscule crew and cast (another standout performance from himself) and became known in Harlem as The Low Budget Film. "If you're not prepared to risk your own money, why should anyone else?" says John. That's nearly revolutionary talk!

Croc 'n' Roll?

Remember *Alligator*—scripted by John Sayles, of course. Well, see ya later and all that and in a while... *Croc*/Stephen Cross wrote this one about a 30 ft crocodile biting through \$4m and most of down-down. Shooting starts around now. The makers are American which is probably why they think they are "introducing" their Aussie star, John Waters. John's made plenty of movies. He's just been left adrift in the rapids of Mel Gibson, Bryan Brown and the father of 'em all, Jack Thompson, is all.

Dan's Living Dead

Now it can be told... What is in Dan O'Bannon's script for the film that has George Romero in such a tizzy, *Return of the Living Dead*. First, far from not ripping off or alluding to George's classic, the opening scene has two young medical supplies' clerks discussing one of the weirdest things they've ever seen... *Night of the Night Dead*, of course! And the movie was a true story, according to one of them—a chemical spill near Pittsburgh in 1966 seeped into an Army graveyard and contaminated, not to say reanimated, the GI bodies. The Army covered everything up, of course. Screwed things up, too. Hence the bodies are now in metal drums in these guys' place of work. When they go take a look-see, well, the old green vapour leaks out and a few corpses start atwitching.

So might George and his producer-partner, Richard Rubinstein, when they also get hold of a resumé of Dan's script—which he's due to start directing in November. On the other hand—and unless I happened to be, let's say, a mite merry the night I read it—I presume it's all a Romero send-up. Example: Once the dead start stalking around, the clerks' boss says they can be destroyed by smashing their brains. To prove it, he cuts off one zombie's head... and the corpse keeps on coming like a Monty P. jape. "It worked in the movie," moans the boss.

From there on, brains becomes the movie's in-word. When Tina, one of local punk-gang, meets The Tar Man—"a skeleton covered with black tarry glop, wobbly and loathsome"—he, or it says, "Brains. Live brains!" and tries to lurch on hers. Tina escapes but it's not long before a battalion of dead (cremating a couple sent their ashes up in the sky and right back down again in a novel form of acid rain which does wonders for the stiffs planted in the local cemetery) are eating cops' and paramedics' brains out... "like melons". Most of the gang (Freddy, Frank, Suicide, Meat, Chuck, Scuz, Dede, Tina and Casey) become zombies. Freddy hobbles around yelling, "Tina, I love you. Let me eat your brains..." Dede, nude save for muddy leg-warmers, turns into something "hollowed and shrivelled like the Phan-

ton of the Opera," and munches on tramps. And one corpse simply uses the ambulance's radio to order seconds for everyone. "This is Mobile 13. Send more paramedics!"

George 'n' Richard—over to you!

Metrop 'n' Roll

After the premiere of Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time in America*—after 13 years waiting—the other main event was, undoubtedly, the first screening of Giorgio Moroder's reconstruction, colour-tinting and rock scoring of Fritz Lang's 1926 sf masterpiece, *Metropolis*. Movie-buff purists may howl. I thought it superb. After all, the way Vangelis scored *Chariots of Fire* and *The Bounty*, we're getting used to modern music enhancing non-mod stories. My interview with Moroder is due in a later issue. Suffice for now to quote PSO chief Mark Damon in summing up the thrilling "new" movie as

"a film of the future made in the past with the music of the present."

Rock 'n' Dune?

Incidentally, Moroder told me he might be scoring *Dune*, which somewhat took my breath away. It's rather stupefying that the year's sf biggie, all set for a US Christmas opening, has not signed a composer with six months to go. "Well, if it's a fast job they need they'll have come to the right man," grinned Giorgio.

Stunning Wolves

(And I'm not talking soccer...) It was, perhaps, fitting that the lofty, stately figure of Christopher Lee was impossible to miss at the big Cannes bash hosted by ITC Entertainment and Palace Productions. (It was also, perhaps, inevitable that I wasn't invited). For the toast of the evening was

the two companies' first film in unison... and rather more important for the future of our industry, the debut production of Nick Powell and Stephen Woolley's *Palace combine*. The film? Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves*. A horror fantasy like no other we've seen, it was the talk to the town after packed screenings of a 20-minute promo reel that was, in a word, sensational!

Neil Jordan is the Irish novelist, scenarist and former John Boorman acolyte who knocked us all over at Cannes in 82 with his first feature, *Angel* (*US: Danny Boy*). If nothing else, he showed us that the Irish were a film force to be reckoned with and this year, Ireland had its first entry in the Cannes competition (it won Best Actress), two other fine movies on show in the market and they were searching for scratch to finance a pile of other goodies. Steve Woolley was among those of us bowled over by Jordan's work and decided that Palace's first entry into movie-making must be directed by him. (Sam Raimi was busy!).

Jordan suggested Angela Carter's nine-page version of Red Riding Hood from her book, *The Bloody Chamber*. She'd already sent him a short script of it—"very graphic, very dramatic, very visual it cried out to be built." He was thinking in terms of another Channel 4 film like *Angel*, then Palace joined the project and felt it could be tackled for about £800,000 on location. But no, it had to be a controlled studio environment. More money! Two million quid in all. And so, ITC got into the deal, the intricacies of which (Palace release *Wolves* in Britain, ITC have it for the world, etc) really don't concern us. It's the film we want. And judging by the 20 minutes on show, we're in for something really really special around September.

Naturally enough, with such a low budget (\$3m in Hollywoodese), the film-makers were forced to explore new methods of tackling expensive notions—just like Lucas, Spielberg and Carpenter in their early days. "We had to throw out the rule book on how you make a special effects movie," comments Steve Woolley. He and Neil Jordan were in safe hands... Chris Tucker, the *Quest For Fire* and *Elephant Man*, transforms the cast into animals in a staggering manner. Anton Furst built the amazing forests—"nothing twee or precious or Noddyland or Disney," adds Woolley—at Shepperton. The cast includes Angela Lansbury, David Warner, *Angel*'s Stephen Rea and newcomer Sarah Patterson as Little Red Riding... Well, no, relax, as Rosaleen. "She's a young girl," explains Neil Jordan, "seeing everything that's monstrous and wonderful in life. It's a film populated by monsters but a very positive story. It's about confronting nightmares and shaking hands with them." Like, er, how do you go! (For more on *Company of Wolves* turn to page 28 this issue.)



Above: Kyle MacLachlan as Paul and Sean Young as Chani in a steamy scene from *Dune*. Below: Kenneth McMillan as the flying Baron.



PREVIEW:

by Tony Crawley

It's been a long wait. Sixteen years. Not too long, perhaps, when the sequel is set twenty-six years from now. But ten years from then... 2010!

And for the moment, at least, no mention of the sub-title that confirms the authenticity of Arthur C. Clarke's 2001 sequel – *Odyssey Two*.

Of course, the sequel is minus the master of the original. Stanley Kubrick is not part of the MGM team scurrying to get the much-awaited

movie ready for Christmas openings (and no doubt a vast range of Xmas toys). At the beginning, it was said he would be playing some supervisory role. For the moment, the Kubrick name is missing from MGM hype.

Peter Hyams, he who has soared mightily high with films like *Capricorn One* and come (apparently) adrift with others like *Outland*, is in charge of the sequel in the triple-threat capacity of writer, producer and director. "2010 is a film about our world and our ability to live in peace," says Hyams. "It's a film about... hope."

"It's a very accessible story which explains a lot of the elements of the first film. It's a mammoth concept, an extraordinary notion and it takes a quantum leap forward."

The hype, you'll appreciate, has begun... And these are the first pictures released by MGM, guarding Hyams' secrets as closely as if they were NASA's.

Hyams, like Clarke's novel, takes up the story where Kubrick left it – more or less. From Earth, that is, rather than where astronaut Dave Bowman ended up. Nine years have passed and Clarke's world has pondered long the mysterious events surrounding the fate of the American interplanetary spaceship, *Discovery*, its crew – including, of course, the malevolent computer, HAL.

Time, then, to check up on things...

A Russian-American team – "forced to suppress their political differences to unite under the common bond of science," it says here – is assembled for the mission. Their craft is the Soviet pride, *Leonov*. And once out there, in the outer reaches of our solar system, they locate the abandoned *Discovery*... and the curious black monolith orbiting Jupiter, the great enigma of the galaxies.

What then?

Read the book! And work out what you might do in the circumstances – and constraints – of adapting it for the screen. Because Peter Hyams sure ain't giving very much away. Not yet.

"A series of odd events unfolds around them," is all he'll say about the fate of the mix of cosmo- and astro-nauts and their scientific partners.

Well, he, or MGM's purple prose writer, adds a little more. "Then, in an awesome display, they witness the miracle of creation. In the brilliant instant, mankind is awed and humbled as his perception of his place in the Universe is inexorably changed."

Sounds good. And with such awesome displays in the capable grasp of triple-Oscar-winner Richard Edlund (ex-ILM and now working for Doug Trumbull's SPFX combine), one presupposes it's all going to look damned good, too.

Roy Scheider heads up the cast as Dr Heywood Floyd, ex-chief of the U.S. space agency and leader of the Americans aboard the *Leonov*. This was William Sylvester's role in the original, of course. Keir Dullea, however, returns to reprise his by now classic role of Capt Dave Bowman and Douglas Rain is once more supplying the voice of HAL.

Among Scheider's party are Bob Balaban, finally up yonder after his *Close Encounters* with space travel, and the man one never expected to see flying again after *Twilight Zone*, John Lithgow – just about the busiest character actor in all Hollywood. Our own Helen Mirren – Best Actress as you'll recall at this year's Cannes festival for *Cal* – has the top female role. The rest of the (main) cast comprises six ex-patriot Russian actors (a rock singer among 'em) and one Czech who form the cosmonaut half of the joint team.

For the record, Peter Hyams started directing 2010 on Monday, February 6 at the MGM studios in Culver City – after a full nine months preproduction gestation. Last I heard, he was due to finish on time in mid-May on the studio's largest two stages including Stage 15, now claimed to be "the largest in the Western world" (I've not heard Pine-wood's comment on that!). Then the loca-

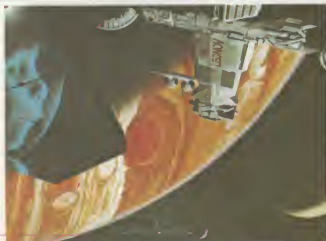


A portrait of Roy Scheider as Dr Heywood Floyd with computer HAL.

2010



Left: Two astronauts aboard the *Leónov*, a Russian spaceship. Below left: The publicity art for Peter Hyams' 2010. Below right: Dr Floyd, ex-chief of the US space agency. This role was played by William Sylvester in 2001 – *A Space Odyssey*.



tions began – strictly on Earth. Three days at the VLA Radio Astronomy facility in Socorro, New Mexico – and a few more in Washington, D.C.

The capital shooting made more publicity than the rest of the film put together (for the moment). Hyams wanted a shot of the White House. He wanted a little life going on in the street outside, though. He suggested a bum, maybe, sitting on a bench. He got his bum... a Hitchcockian cameo acting out by a certain Arthur C. Clarke!

I must say he looks a rather well-garbed tramp. Yes, but then I'm forgetting, he's a bum twenty-six years from now. And if the Soviets and the Yanks can get it together by then, space-wise, at least, maybe inflation has been knocked on the head, too.

Tacky note: I wasn't joking about the 2010 Merrie Crimble gifties... They might come expensive, though. According to MGM/UA Entertainment's Merchandising Bulletin, which advises the world of commerce about



what's coming from the movie world and what to get into, the business opportunities for companies wanting to make a killing out of the sequel cover "virtually anything which suggests the near future" such as "products, services, fashions, electronics, packaging." In short, 2010, which we hope is even half as good as the original – can we logically expect it to be more? – has a built-in "intriguing promotion potential with companies whose products are state-of-the-art or ahead of their time."

INTERVIEW:

George Takei, Walter Koenig and Mark Lenard

Interview by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier

George Takei (Sulu) and Walter Koenig (Chekov) are part of the Enterprise family. Mark Lenard, who reprises the role of Sarek, Spock's father, is not. Yet, Lenard's association with *Star Trek* is more than episodic, since he also played a Romulan Commander (in the episode "Balance of Terror") and the doomed Klingon captain at the beginning of *Star Trek - The Motion Picture*.

The three men, easy in their "civilian" clothes sat down to discuss their involvement with the film.

STARBURST: Did they film any extra footage for the picture that might allow for an expanded television version?

GEORGE TAKEI: Yes. There's one major sequence that's missing, and you don't know what happened before I throw that guard! Also, on Vulcan, we got to see so much of the Vulcan royalty and the religious hierarchy and so forth. Spectacular scenes of pageantry. That was cut.

MARK LENARD: There were some "gags" as they call them. There were the silver virgins and the gold virgins, and they had some tricks that maybe would have intruded. They were carrying the palette with Spock's body on it, and suddenly the palette floats in the air and their hands are above it. I don't know if it didn't work quite right, or if it just intruded. I like the cut, frankly. I liked it because that long shot coming down into the temple just seemed to bring the right atmosphere for the ceremony for Spock. Then there was a scene where all the crew members come up to me and different things go on. That was cut out.

Starburst: When Ricardo Montalban resumed his role in the film, he had to go back and look at video tapes of the original episode. Mark, did you do something similar?

LENARD: No. It's running, so I've seen it several times, and at conventions it's always running, so I didn't really. I was fairly familiar with it. The only thing we had to do was... You know, all the technical people are new. Frank Phillips is retired and Tom Burman has taken over to do the make up effects and so forth. Harve Bennett is new, Roddenberry is there, kind of in the background, but he didn't tend to these technical things anyway. So, nobody knew how to do the make-up.

They had to dig up the old segment and run it, so they could see how much grey to put into my hair, what the make-up looked like, the shape of the eyebrows and the angle that they're raised. All these things. I remembered and I had my barber cut my



hair, so I did that on my own. They redesigned the ears. The ears are new, smaller, more graceful and they seem to fit with the face a bit more. But, these people have to practice with it. It's very delicate, hard to put on so it looks real and blends properly. We did a test and Leonard thought I looked too much like his brother, so they had to redo it.

Starburst: Was there ever any talk of referring to your "wife?"

LENARD: I didn't hear any. The only thing that I can think of is that there just wasn't time for all this. It wasn't the story of Sarek and Amanda, and I don't think they could have made a big enough part to warrant Jane Wyatt appearing.

Starburst: There seems to be more development of the characters in this film, a deepening of the relationships that they share...

TAKEI: I suppose that aspect is there, but as actors we all want to see our characters fleshed out a bit more. I suppose we got a bit more footage in this one than we did in *Star Trek II* and certainly in *Star Trek I*. But, I don't think it's really done too much to reveal other dimensions of our characters.

WALTER KOENIG: I think the characters, in many cases, are more personalized in this film. You feel a real sympathy for McCoy and Scotty. They're more endearing, there's a charm that has not before been exploited with some of the characters.

Starburst: What kind of input did you gentlemen have in the film?

TAKEI: As a matter of fact, I tried to persuade Harve Bennett to cut that reference to Sulu as tiny! I'm afraid that was the actor's ego getting in the way. I wasn't too persuasive, obviously! And I'm glad I

didn't succeed now!

KOENIG: None whatsoever here!

Starburst: How was it to work with a co-actor as director?

KOENIG: I think we all concur that working with Leonard was really a stimulating and very positive experience. He gave us the license to do the best we can, and a critical enough eye to censor, edit, if we were hitting the wrong note. I think we all feel we had confidence in his taste, that he was well prepared to do what he did. In general, it was a very congenial relationship. In fact, George and I and a few of the other people, in gratitude, hosted a party the last day of shooting, simply as a way of saying thank you for all the good work.

Starburst: Is it different working with an actor as director?

KOENIG: Not necessarily. A lot of directors have been actors. I think those that have... well, I shouldn't make generalisations, but I think it's a valuable asset to have been an actor. You understand the language, you understand the difficulty and the problems...

LENARD: Sometimes it's a burden for the people you're working with...

KOENIG: That's why I say it's a generalisation that you have to be careful about. Sometimes the director wants to act all the roles, because he has his own interpretations, having been an actor. That wasn't the case here. He had confidence in us, and in turn

gave us confidence in him.

Starburst: Is he a director that likes to get it on the first couple of takes, or is he comfortable around the fifth or sixth take?

KOENIG: I think he was adaptable enough to go with the first take if the first take was good, and demanding enough to take four or five takes if he needed them.

Starburst: Do you think *Star Trek* will continue when it can no longer be done with the original characters?

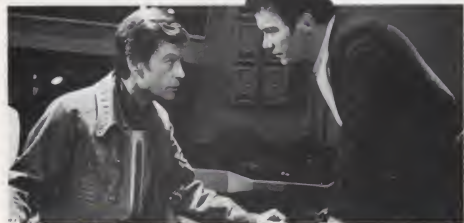
TAKEI: Yes, because change, the progress of time and adapting to it, was part of what *Star Trek* was about. The young crew coming on board was a part of what *Star Trek* was saying. That as we matured, we gained experience, wisdom and so forth. There are the losses that happen with it, but also there is fresh, young blood.

LENARD: You know, I'm sure, that the original concept Roddenberry had when he started the movies, was to kill off the old-timers at one point and, even then, replace them with younger blood. I think that's why he had those younger actors. It always strikes me as very strange when I see somebody, like this fellow that was in command of that sister ship. All these strange people being in *Star Trek*. It just doesn't strike me as right.

KOENIG: This picture, particularly, and the sense of family that it generates, I think, will do as much as maybe the 79 episodes did toward carving in stone this group of actors as an entity, and their association with *Star Trek*. First of all, this picture is going to be very successful. Second of all, the message of this picture is all for one and one for all. I think both of those things will probably go further to establish the mythology of this group of people, than almost anything that has preceded it.



Opposite page: Mark Lenard as the Vulcan Sarek, Spock's father. Top left: The smiling faces of Walter Koenig as Chekov and George Takei as Sulu. Bottom left: Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelley) and Admiral Kirk (William Shatner) aboard the USS Enterprise in *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Above: Robin Curtis as Lt. Saavik. Below: A portrait of William Shatner as Admiral James T. Kirk.



DUNE

If they write a song to go with *Dune*, they'd probably call it: *Que pasa con la luz?*

Your Spanish may not be so hot. But everybody — and I do mean every-body! — on the twenty-strong cast and a thousand-plus crew knows the phrase. They could be British like Francesca Annis, Freddie Jones, Sian Phillips, Sting, cameraman Freddie Francis, effects folk Kit West and Brian Smithies, production designer Tony Masters, costumer Bob Ringwood and editor Antony Gibbs. They could be the American contingent: like the star Kyle MacLachlan (he's Paul), Jose Ferrer, Linda Hunt, Richard Jordan, Paul Smith, Dean Stockwell, Sean Young, director David Lynch, visual effects man Albert Whitlock. Italian like the producer Raffaella De Laurentiis, her mama, Silvana Mangano and, of course, Carlo Rambaldi or Swedish like Max von Sydow. . . They know. The phrase is printed on their hearts by now.

It means: What's gone wrong now. . . ?

Nobody knows the troubles *Dune* has seen — and somehow overcome.

The fact that an increasing number of Hollywood projects have been mounted in Mexico City of late — from Mike Douglas *Romancing The Stone* to brother Joel producing Pamela Sue Martin's *Torchlight* — is strictly a matter of economy. Certainly nothing to do with great climate, fresh air and the ease of long-distance tele-communication. Nor of basic electricity, nor the understanding natures of Customs officials!

The Douglas brothers had it easy compared with the mighty *Dune* operation, which lasted a full eighteen months in and around the Churubusco studios in Mexico City. David Lynch started on the principal photography on March 30, 1983. He finally called a wrap on September 9. That was hardly the end of the affair, however. For a further five months, until February 4 this year, the SPFX work was still happening. Add to that schedule six months of pre-production and the use of three, finally four, different units (two of which were still hard at it, romancing the grindstone, in the allegedly "quiet" post-production phase) and you'll appreciate that *Dune* was no simple matter.

Now most of the problems encountered by the cast and crew were normal enough matters related to the sheer size and scope of such a movie. The rest of the hassles can be summed up in two words. Mexico City.

"Everyone was *always* sick," says Francesca Annis, who plays Lady Jessica, wife of Jurgen Prochnow's Duke Leto Atreides, and our hero Paul's mum.

David Lynch, who has, well, somewhat aged in the last couple of years since finding *The Elephant Man* problematical, nods in agreement. "There was hardly a day when someone wasn't sick or wasn't feeling good. But somehow we managed. I mean, suddenly you realised you'd gotten through the day and you'd done it without so-and-so who'd been home with a 105 fever or something."

The sicknesses were manifold, never mere malingering and always exotic. As Mexico City (pop: 17 million) happens to be 7,500 ft up, the main



complaints were related to lack of oxygen. Hence, dizziness, fatigue, hypo-ventilation, sleeplessness. These do not come under the heading of Harrison Ford's famous *turistas*. The locals suffer from oxygen-deprivation, as well. Only difference – they're used to it.

Next, the actual air... Mexico City also happens to be, at that vast height, ringed by mountains which concentrate all the pollutants rising from the industrial valleys; plus millions of vehicles excreting choking diesel. Plus there's the stench from the garbage which, accordingly to no less an unimpeachable source than *The Guardian*, accumulates at the rate of 800 tons per day and is "beyond the city's capacity for disposal."

Sure doesn't help the freshness of the air. Smog is rife!

This, too, affects the locals, 40% of whom suffer from chronic bronchitis. As, *The Guardian* put it: simply breathing in Mexico City is much the same as smoking your way through two packs of 20 ciggies a day.

It is, therefore, one of those burbs where, if you want to see Christmas, you don't drink the water. So, bottled water only. And keep that covered or the airborne impurities from so many differing sources will zap that, too, and well... so-and-so has gone down with the lurgie again.

No great need to add that you have to watch what you eat, down there, as well. (In fact, hearing some of the stories, people had to be careful which way the wind was blowing before they opened their mouth and delivered a line on the sets). This particular food problem was not exactly sided when the local Customs held a De Laurentis shipment of pasta, spaghetti, in the main – for three months before letting it out to the dining room, Raffaella had built for her vast unit.

The Customs held on to most things from wigs, moustaches and beards to piano wire for SPFX, plus the film's actual rushes. But the spaghetti blockade hurt most. Ultimately, everything was released – except for some Polaroid film stock and a video-recorder!

Don't know about you but when I'm ill, I like to get home fast. Die in my own bed, kinda thing. The poor *Dune* people couldn't even phone home. At least, not as fast as E.T. could. At the Churubusco studios, the unit was accorded two direct lines only. One for Raffaella, t'other for the accountant. Everyone else from stars to crew had to wait upon the generosity of the switchboard girls. They were definitely out to lunch – and why not, as the switchboard in Mexico's largest studio was invariably out of order. At best, it would half-an-hour to get a call put through.

As most of the unit happened to be foreigners, their calls were overseas calls, of course. This meant that they and the studio operators were then dependent on the good graces of the Mexico's international operators. Cue for a second song. These operators were intermittently announced as being *en junta*. Now, with the Falklands still fresh in our minds, that gives the impression they were off running the country. Not quite. They were simply – like so many Hollywoodians when you call – "in a meeting". And as if to match Hollywoodians, these meetings would last anything from two to four hours. During that time, not only *Dune* but Mexico would be cut off from the rest of the world. By the time you'd won your call, the poor souls at the other end were probably in mid-slobber and none too enthusiastic at the *Dune*-types' excitement at finally making contact.

Then, there was the electricity. Or to put it another way, then there was not the electricity! Hence the budget rose again to buy nine generators to power the sound stages, at least – while the hair-dryers,

copying-machines and typewriters had to wait on the whimsicality of the Mexican electricity board. Torches were at a premium! (Maybe that's why the Pam Sue Martin film is called *Torchlight*.)

I suppose that being cut off from the world was not that bad – rather apt, really, as this hopefully epic version of Frank Herbert's twenty-year-old book (the fifth in the series was out in March) is, at base, about a whole new world. To create it, Tong Masters had to come up with 75 sets in all, in turn, for the night Churubusco soundstages... plus the locations in

such diverse places as the Tlaxcala desert (the Samalayuca in the film), the car-park at Latin America's largest football stadium and even Mexico City's Hospital Metropolitano (and not because the stars were laid up there!).

In a word, David Lynch says the desert was "unique". Then again, what wasn't?

Take Lynch's choice of Las Aguilas Rojas, or The Red Eagles as his planet Arrakis, aka Dune. Like so much else, it seemed a good idea at the time. The photos of the place looked, yes, well, unique. It is, after all, one huge lava bed, courtesy the eruption of the Ixtazihuatl volcano some three thousand years before Christ, resulting in a high, almost surreal lava rock thrust and grey lava dust all over.

Then, David went on a recon. "When we first went there to scout, on the way out, I saw about twelve dead dogs. And then we got there and it's a trash dump. We walked down amongst those strange rocks and there was a dead pig that had a huge slash – dead. Lots of dead dogs, a dead rat..."

Naturally, he didn't take to what he saw. But he knew what it could be – indeed, should be like. So the decision was made. They'd use the place after a decontamination squad had cleaned up the site, removing carcasses and the debris of generations, sterilising everything left and carefully sifting, combing for broken glass under the lava dust.

"There was masses of garbage," Lynch continues, "bags and bags of it. Finally, the place was just beautiful – a great looking location."

Not quite perfect, though, the fine powdery lava dust erupted in small puffs as feet sank into it – like Neil Armstrong on the moon. Great! No, not quite. For Lynch and his SPFX supervisor Kit West (the

Raiders Oscar-winner), small puffs of dust were not enough to convey the total aridity of the Dune planet. Out went the order: Send more dust! But a lot!

Tons upon tons of the stuff arrived. Fuller's Earth, in the main, dyed yellow and red. And for the three weeks of night shooting, wind-machines added to the area's smog by blowing the stuff all over everywhere – and everyone. Even with the surgical masks on, goggles and head coverings of one kind or another, the dust got into every human nook and cranny.

"If you look at the continuity editor's script," laughs David Lynch (believe me, he's only laughing now), "you can tell by which pages are yellow and which are red, what scenes we were shooting on which of those dusk-to-dawn shoots. As a matter of fact, you can hardly see the type any more. Just yellow and red pages!"

"When we all staggered back to our hotels in the mornings, as the sun was coming up, we always thought they were going to pitch us out, the way we looked. I mean, these filthy bums. We looked like a hundred or so Al Jolson's, every day!"

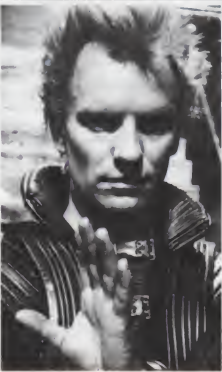
Out in the vast wastes of "Samalayuca" desert, there was, naturally another problem. Not dust, simply...

But no, let's keep that... and the drama of the biggest front-projection screen in the world... Tony Masters' favourite set... Bob Ringwood's costumes headache ("there were four planets to work with")... Freddie Francis' camera hassles... Brian Smithies' model work... Carlo Rambaldi's worms (er, if you see what I mean)... not to mention Kit West tackling the problem – "no, the challenge!" – of allowing bulky Kenneth McMillan's Baron to fly well, ... rise... well, float... eighteen inches off the ground... until the next time, the right and proper time, the time for our Making of *Dune* reportage.

This, then, has been a taste. A trailer. Maybe even something of a citation for the medals Dino and daughter Raffaella De Laurentis must be striking any day now for their long-suffering cast and crew of *Dune*.

Of course, if they want a song in English, David Lynch has that title. "Somehow we managed". ■

Opposite page: Francesca Annis as Jessica stands before an appropriately alien staircase. Below left: Sting as the knife-wielding Feyd. Below right: A portrait of Francesca Annis.



While recently doing some research I had the opportunity to check through some of the books available on science fiction television. It was certainly entertaining making comparisons between them, and from this I was able to single out the best and most informative of these.

First are the *Starlog TV episode Guides Volumes 1 and 2*. (Volume 1 is, incidentally, out of print and very hard to track down). Among the TV shows covered, only 6 out of a total of 24 are British series. That's hardly surprising when you consider the wealth of American material not included. The British shows listed are *Doctor Who* (1974-81 seasons only), *The Prisoner*, Gerry Anderson's *Thunderbirds* (never actually networked in America, but fondly remembered as the best puppet series of all), *Blake's 7*, *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons* and *UFO*. The inclusion of the Anderson series is fair enough, but it does give the appearance that sf tv in Britain consists of nothing else. Perhaps the fact that Anderfan David Hirsch worked on the books had something to do with it. Managing to keep critical appraisal to a minimum, the books are exactly what they claim, straight forward nonsense episode guides. Among the American series in Volume 1 are *Batstar Galactica*, *Man From Atlantis*, *The Starlost*, the animated *Star Trek*, *Logan's Run*, *Wonder Woman* and *Lost In Space*.

Also concentrating heavily on the episode guide format is Gary Gerani and Paul Schulman's *Fantastic Television* published by Harmony Books. Containing detailed synopsis on *Superman*, *One Step Beyond*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Thriller*, *The Outer Limits*, *Batman*, *Star Trek*, *The Invaders*, *The Prisoner*, *Night Gallery*, *Kolchak*; *The Night Stalker*, *Space 1999* and the Irwin Allen series, the book also features a brief study of other forms of American and British tele-fantasy. Kids programmes and made for tv movies. The book does contain a few errors (Bob May did not speak for the Robinson Robot), and unfortunately Mr Gerani's comments on some shows are, for the most part, pretty banal. But combined with the *Starlog* books, *Fantastic Television* is a worthy addition to the bookshelf.

Two books dealing in science fiction television as part of their text are *The Science Fictionary* by Ed Naha, and *The Science Fiction Image* by Gene Wright. The former, published by Wideview Books includes many titles never screened on British tv. Even then there are a few mistakes. According to Mr Naha in *Doctor Who* the TARDIS initials stand for "Time and Relative Distance in Space", and the overall layout is a little irritating. *The Science Fiction Image* published by Columbus Books, on the other hand, has the advantage of numerous colour photographs, and yet its mixed tv and film

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Above: George Reeves as the mild-mannered Daily Planet reporter, Clark Kent from the Superman tv show of the Fifties. Below: Kirk Alyn as the Man of Steel looking a little like Russ Abbott's Cooperman, seen here rescuing Jimmy Olsen, from Columbia's 15-part serial.



entries are a little annoying. There are many references throughout to Allen's *Lost In Space*, and yet somehow the series has failed to be included under a separate entry.

John Brosnan's *Future Tense*, even though publisher Macdonald and

Jane's gave it the worst jacket illustration ever to grace the cover of a film book, makes interesting reading, with a brief synopsis of various tv shows including such obscure entries as *The Year of the Sex Olympics* by Nigel Kneale, and the awfully pretentious

1990, produced by the BBC. Other sources on offer include a three part history of sf tv in *Fantastic Films* magazine and of course, back issues of *Starburst*. The definitive book on Fantasy Television has yet to be written. American shows are well and truly covered in hundreds of publications, but many great British sf series are long forgotten by a majority of authors. Radio has also produced a very impressive selection of sf serials from the superb adaptations of *War of the Worlds* and *Lord of the Rings*, to original material such as *The Slime*, a chiller in the *Quatermass* mould from almost twenty years ago.

One tv series with extensive coverage is *The Avengers*. Dave Rogers' book of the same name has sold in vast quantities and Dave's publisher, Michael Joseph, are delighted with its reception in America. One major problem however, concerning nearly all the programmes mentioned in these books are their failure to be repeated on television. Many sf fans have never seen or even heard of a vast majority of them. But don't let programmers tell you that their scheduling doesn't allow for such repeats. The truth of the matter is that the tv companies, for the most part, can't be bothered to tie up the loose ends involved in rescreening an old series, eg Equity clearances and royalties to actors and producers.

One such fate has befallen *The Avengers* - cancelled by Channel 4, without completing the run of Linda Thorson stories. Yet the company claims to have shown all the episodes that it originally bought. What is even more disappointing is that C4 rumoured a while back that it was purchasing the black and white Diana Rigg series. Perhaps the best thing to do is write to Channel 4 and make an official complaint. Dave's *On Target* magazine would also like to hear from viewers angered by such a decision. With *The Avengers* appearing continually in C4's top ten programmes, cancelling it in order to show *Callan* is not really justified.

However, congratulations to Channel 4 for its showing of the complete series of *The Munsters*, albeit in the wrong order. For a long time various tv books have argued with each other over exactly how many episodes were originally made. But a new volume entitled *Universal Television Series*, has just been published and gives the correct information regarding the infamous Munster family of Mockingbird Heights, and that coincides with Channel 4's viewing number. And finally now that the *Nat-West Bank* has decided to use *The Flintstones* in its advertising, perhaps Channel 4 could concentrate on returning the stone age family of Bedrock to our screens and hopefully treat us to a complete run... what was that? ... oh, don't worry there's only 166 episodes. ■



A DYING PLANET.
A FIGHT FOR LIFE.
THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK.

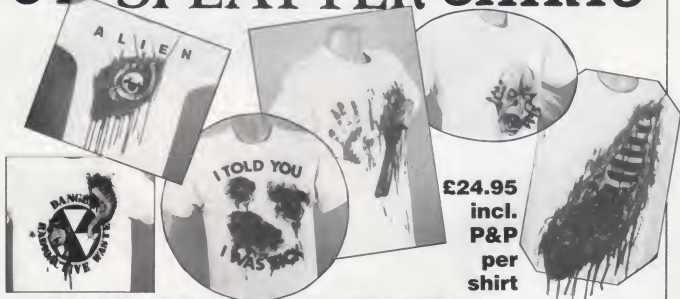
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Futurekill

**A Starburst Interview
with Director Ron Moore
by Alan Jones**

In production it was called *Splatter*. Now it's called *Futurekill*. Texas-based Ron Moore changed the name of his directorial debut because he didn't want to confuse the market place with two films in simultaneous release with similar titles, the other being *Splatter University*. Also the word "splatter" now has a connotation that Moore felt didn't reflect the content of his movie at all, as he is adamant in claiming it isn't a blood and guts film.

This short interview is the result of my meeting 25 year old Ron Moore totally by accident at this year's American Film Market in Los Angeles. He was there checking out the competition and by chance sat next to me in one of the 1/2 hour gaps between films. Such is the atmosphere at the Market that we struck up a conversation.

So what is *Splatter/Futurekill* about? Moore explains it this way. "Well, don't groan, but basically it's about some fraternity members on a "hell night". They have tarred and feathered another fraternity's president and have to make amends by kidnapping a "No nuke" protester to make him the mascot of a party they have planned. The nuclear movement is based downtown and the guy they eventually grab turns out to be the very radical leader of the whole group. That's the character Splatter. It becomes a race to get to the city boundaries when Splatter puts the word out that the fraternity is responsible for a mythical murder. The film is set in the near future - about 1988 I'd say - and is a very conceivable plot if the peace movements carry on the way they are. I suppose it is a hard film to categorise as it combines a wide range of things like a New Wave score, camp



Below left: A journal of Ed Neal as character Edwyn Neal. Right: George as character Splatter. Photo by Mark H. Gurnsey. Art by [illegible]

humour, serious statements and a smattering of gore. I think it will catch audiences off guard as it starts out as a comedy and switches to being quite nightmarish."

Moore wrote *Futurekill* with two other people - Kathy Hagan and John Best - when the idea for another film seemed to be going nowhere. "It was called *Death in Crimson* but it needed financing beyond a limit I could locate. So John and I devised *Futurekill* and brought Kathy into the project so we could amalgamate her anti-punk fashion designs and ideas."

Next Moore set about providing the most complete package ever to induce a major financier to take the first tentative step into film production. "I had completed storyboards, a cast and crew already lined up, the look of the film outlined on colour plates and some of the music already composed when I went to see our prospective backer, Don Barker. He's a private entrepreneur in Austin, Texas, who has a lot of companies to his name. Anything he could ask me was down on paper somewhere, even a breakdown of how similar films had fared in the market place. *Futurekill* cost just under a million dollars to make, and I must say I felt extremely responsible for all that money. But in Texas, your dollar goes further and I feel

we have achieved a higher quality look than most other films in our price bracket. We even shot it on 35mm Panavision panaflex to make it as good as we could."

Another major reason why the film got financed in the first place was the inclusion very early on in the casting process of Edwin Neal. Neal was the cannibalistic hitchhiker who put Texas on the map forever in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. "I met Ed when I was a student at the University of Texas. He would sell us film posters. I pulled Ed into the project very early on because I realised the *Chainsaw* hook was potent enough to get possible backers interested in the project. It turned out that he had maintained a good friendship over the years with Marilyn Burns, the victim in *Chainsaw* and when we were discussing one of the characters in the film, Dorothy Grim, it both hit us at the same time that she would be perfect for the part. As she is the character to kill Ed's Splatter, I think she certainly gets a sort of revenge on him for all he put her through in *Chainsaw*. Wayne Bell, our soundman, Murray Church our production manager and Robert Burns who did some of our special make-up effects, all worked on *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* too. Everyone else on the film was in my age range."





Right: A few weeks after the release, *Ed Wood* was made. Note the bullet lodged in his forehead, used to pump blood. (Moore's *Ed Wood* is a *Splatter* Below: Ron Moore directs a scene of *Futurekill*)



Moore has always been interested in film and has been involved one way or another when he worked for Texas Instruments making 70mm seismological films for oil companies and managing theatres for the American Multi-Cinema chain. "It was a good solid base but nothing really prepared me for the rigors of full-scale film production. It was obviously unlike any other experience I've ever had. But as it progressed, I got more fluent and it became easier to deal with. My inexperience made me more open to ideas and I gave a lot of autonomy to the different departments. For example I told Kathy to go wild with the costume designs. 'Grab an idea,' I said, 'and go with it.' That's why we have such marvellous things in *Futurekill*, like Splatter's intravenous, electronic speed system, where all he does is push a button and amphetamine is automatically injected into his arm. It was the same with my director of photography, John Lewis. Although I had basic guidelines, I wanted him to throw everything he had into the film. This attitude really kept us all going and created a very positive approach. That is why the film is so dynamic in all areas."

In all, *Futurekill* took 6½ weeks to shoot. An initial month was shot last August in downtown Austin's deserted alleyways and the



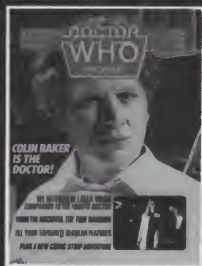
remaining work was done this February which mainly comprised of all the major effects. But Moore realised very early on that *Splatter* as a title had to go. "We were pushing it slightly, don't you think? John and I were trying to name the characters in the

script in the same manner as pop stars like Billy Idol. You know, a really rugged surname teamed with a homely first one. We made a list and *Splatter* just seemed so right for the character and the title. But whenever we talked about the film for publicity purposes we got the reactions you would expect. So it became a collaborative decision to change it. The splatter is still there but it's cut to a minimum. There is one death inflicted by a ghirka knife but for the most part the violence is tasteful – one is shot behind a sheet of tin for example, leaving more to the imagination. I certainly didn't want to get lumped with *Splatter University* or any other gross offerings like that!"

If all goes according to Moore's well laid out plans, *Futurekill* should be on release in America as you read this. "Magic Shadows, the company we have set up, will probably distribute the film. I want more control than to turn it over to a larger company who could possibly handle it to our disadvantage. I set out to make *Futurekill* a cross between *Night of the Living Dead*, *Escape From New York* and *National Lampoon's Animal House*. There was no one in the production who was old-school enough to say I couldn't do it, so I absolutely refuse to sit by and not get the best for all the team out of it."

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It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

What Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom really needed were the missing dinosaurs. I kept hoping they'd make an appearance as the movie progressed but my hopes were in vain. No dinosaurs. Not even a little one.

You see, about a year ago some one who shall remain nameless, but writes for this magazine and has the initials "AJ", returned breathless with excitement from Hollywood with the revelation that the new Indiana Jones epic was going to feature dinosaurs. "Jeepers, what a whizzer of a good idea!" I remember exclaiming at the time, picturing in my mind's eye Harrison Ford cracking his whip over the heads of a herd of Tyrannosaurus Rexes.

For months I went around telling people I knew the Big Secret about the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* sequel. "Dinosaurs," I would announce slyly. "Millions of 'em." My status rose among my peers. People would point and whisper at me as I went by, saying, "Brozzer knows what Lucas and Spielberg are going to do even before they know it themselves."

Of course Lucas and Spielberg kept totally quiet about the dinosaur factor. Not a word about dinosaurs crept out while the movie was being shot at Elstree Studios. When Harrison Ford hurt his back during the shooting they claimed he'd fallen off an elephant but I knew he'd fallen off a dinosaur. Elephant indeed! Who did they think they were trying to kid?

Then a couple of months ago the person whose initials are "AJ" broke the awful news to me. "No dinosaurs. I was misinformed..."

I refused to believe him. I had my heart set on seeing Indiana Jones slogging it out with a gaggle of overgrown reptiles. Nothing less would satisfy me.

Even when I saw the *Temple of Doom* trailer I didn't give up hope. True, the trailer didn't feature hide nor hair of a dinosaur but I thought perhaps they were saving them up as a surprise. And actually the trailer didn't look that hot, despite all the pyrotechnics. It seemed that the centrepiece of the movie was going to be some underground altar built over a pool of bubbling lava. Surely, I told myself, that

had to be more to the film than just that.

I should confess at this point that if there's one thing guaranteed to put me to sleep in a movie it's a "ritual sequence". You know the thing I mean - lots of people in robes or masks chanting stuff like "Hail to the Great Horny-Toed One" while a high priest or priestess intones at length about the powers of darkness while holding a chicken in one hand and a Black and Decker drill in the other. I find such scenes unutterably boring and from the look of the trailer there was going to be a fair few of them in *Indiana Jones*...

It's a pity, I told myself. When Spielberg and Lucas have lulled the audience into a false sense of security with all the chanting and intoning they'll bring on the dinosaurs.

I arrived at the preview screening still hoping for the best. No dinosaurs mentioned in the brief synopsis but a look at the credits perked me up. There were *Jots of Model Makers* and *Effects Animators* listed. That *had* to mean Dinosaurs.

I sat back confidently. The movie began. The couple on my right also began. Chattering, that is (they kept it up throughout the film) but I didn't care. I was sure the dinosaurs would drown them out when the time came.

The first 20 minutes or so of *Indiana Jones* were pretty good. The nightclub sequences were excellent and I liked the early stuff in India even though the girl, Kate Capshaw, was no substitute for Karen Allen and the jokes involving her were somewhat corny (stuff like getting on the elephant backwards; falling off the elephant and landing in the water; not being able to eat the funny "foreign" food etc). It was probably more to do with the way the part was written rather than with Ms Capshaw, but I found her character very grating. Her sole function in the film was to scream a lot and act like a total idiot - presumably Lucas was using her to have a dig at the feminists but who knows, he might consider her to be a believable character...

The film starts to go seriously downhill after the "chamber of descending spikes" sequence (lifted almost entirely from the "garbage crusher" sequence in *Star Wars*, but who cares?) and

Jones and his friends discover the Temple of Doom itself. As I feared it becomes "hail to the Great Horny-Toed One" with knobs on. Yawn, yawn ... Okay, so I woke up a bit when the High Priest shoved his hand into the victim's chest and plucked out his still beating heart. That sort of thing is always good for a laugh (though I couldn't figure out how the guy stayed alive without his heart; was it supposed to be a hypnotically produced illusion? But if so how come Jones almost loses his heart for real at the end of the movie? Huh?). And the scene where the victim was lowered into the pit of fire and sizzles away into nothingness was spectacular too (though I hear both these scenes, and others, will be drastically trimmed by our "Born Again" censors before the film is released).

All very well but what's all this heart-plucking, person-roasting stuff about? Where's the *meat* of the movie? So far all we've had is a bunch of loonies having the Thuggi equivalent of a secret barbecue whereas in *Raiders* Indiana Jones was after nothing less than a super weapon powered by God Himself.

Okay, so there's some waffle about the Thuggis trying to get all five of their sacred stones back together again but as they never succeed in doing this we don't see what would have happened if they had. I was expecting a manifestation of the goddess Kali at the very least ...

I remember checking my watch at the time Jones discovers the Temple and thinking, "Almost an hour to go. Surely we're not going to spend the

rest of the movie underground. They probably escape into a secret valley. A secret valley full of dinosaurs ...". But no, apart from a sequence at the end involving a rope suspension bridge the movie does stay underground. More boring ritual followed by lots of action, true, but action that doesn't have the inventiveness or wit of *Raiders* or even the opening sequences of *Indiana Jones* itself. The big roller-coaster chase on the mine railway, for example, was technically well-done but basically unexciting.

And as for the closing scene with an elephant squirting water at the heroine and everyone laughing, etc, I cringed with embarrassment. It was like something out of an old Tarzan movie. What next for poor Indiana Jones, I wondered. In this story he was saddled with a wise-cracking kid - will he next be seen with Cheeta the Chimp?

True, the climactic sequence with the rope bridge *did* feature some large reptiles but these were not dinosaurs. They were crocodiles. I like crocodiles but they are simply not in the same league as dinosaurs. Sigh.

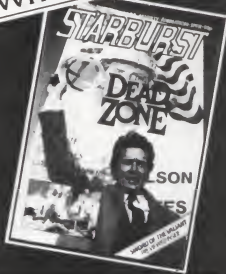
ROMANCING THE JONES

Strangely enough I'd seen another film recently that featured a climax with crocodiles, a rope bridge sequence and a soft, city-bred girl having to cope with life in the jungle and the tough adventurer who rescues her. The film was called *Romancing the Stone* and though obviously a deliberate imitation of Indiana Jones I found it far more amusing and inventive.



Indiana Jones (doing his best Humphrey Bogart impression) contemplates chucking something at *Starburst* columnist John Brannan to stop his ramblings about dinosaurs in the Temple of Doom.

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THE COMPANY OF WOLVES



Top: A wolf wanders down a picturesque sat. Left: Sarah Patterson as Red Riding Hood (aka, Rosaleen) strolls through the enchanted forest.

Starburst presents a special report from the set of this new, low-budget British movie. Our intrepid reporter Alan Jones quizzed producer Steve Woolley and special makeup effects wiz Christopher Tucker about the problems of turning a man into a wolf on £10 a day.

The closer to the interior of a functioning cottage built by makeup artist Chris Tucker's cramped workshop at Shopperton Studios. We are joined by Shepperton resident. We are about to witness, courtesy of a cleverly edited video link, the making of actress Kathryn Pogson by a were-wolf's hand (just prior to this she has been the head "Action" Ms Pogson screams hysterically and acts her heart out but grabs the delicate prosthetic claw too hard and it breaks).

Cut. And a bemused Tucker emerges from the spartan set. "She will too, earned away and broke the machine. Surgery will now have to be done on the phenomenally solved armature before it's ready again for another try tomorrow. This will be up and out of my assistants for three days."

But then the situation has been so tight in the nine week schedule of *The Company of Wolves*, Tucker knows that if a special effect doesn't get done now, prospective audiences will have to live their imaginations.



Chris Tucker, who designed the incredible make-up for *The Elephant Man*, is just one of the men, agreeable surprises about *The Company of Wolves*.

Based on Angela Carter's short story, this is the first film from Palace Productions, the company who run the successful Scala cinema in London and who have recently released such mega-hits as *Diva*, *The Evil Dead* and *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*. Co-financed by ITC with television rights already sold to Channel 4, *The Company of Wolves* stars Angela Lansbury, David Warner, Stephen Rea, 13 year-old Sarah Patterson and another surprise being kept under wraps is the guest appearance of Terence Stamp who agreed to the name for the price of a new suit.

Executive and co-producer Stephen Woolley admits that it's hard to explain exactly what *The Company of Wolves* is about when people ask. Basically, it seems the story is an adult parody of the traditional tale of "Little Red Riding Hood". Director Neil Jordan, whose last film *Angel* so impressed the producers, says, "Its prime concerns are a young

Top: A huntsman goes through a horrible metamorphosis as he changes into a wolf. Above: Part of the amazing werewolf transformation scene as devised by Christopher Tucker. Below: Sarah Patterson as Ragsbitch with Angela Lansbury as the grandmother.



THE COMPANY OF WOLVES

girl's dreams and nightmares about wolfishness." Others say it works on a multitude of levels where reality and imagination increasingly blur; where dream sequences are enclosed in other dream sequences before our heroine, Rosaleen, goes into the threatening forest to meet an attractive young huntsman who makes a bet that he can reach her grandmother's house before her. You can also bet that he's more of a wolf than even she supposes!

And that will bring us to the climax of the film which will be the shocking state-of-the-art metamorphosis of man into wolf along the lines of *An American Werewolf in London* and *The Howling*. Mention those two films to Chris Tucker, though, and you'll see the sparks fly! In his eagerness to immediately differentiate his effects from those of Messrs Rick Baker and Rob Bottin he told me, "*Company* is nothing like those movies because here we are dealing with men turning into wolves on all fours - not werewolves or wolfmen. I'm not interested in doing anything that's been done before. I want to break new ground. I've cut down on a lot of the stuff you've seen before, like hair sprouting on legs, because I want this film to be a totally new experience".

Tucker has had difficulty keeping up with the main unit's shooting - as he says, "Live wolves don't read scripts" - and he is only too well aware of trying to do too much in such a short space of time. He cites the film's ultimate transformation as a case in point. "This is the scene where a wolf's snout emerges through the mouth of the hunter. That scene had to be filmed at the dress rehearsal in case anything went wrong. The eyes were radio controlled and there were so many cables down the dummy's throat that at one stage it didn't look like the mechanisms would fit. The original idea for this transformation was to have the whole of the hunter's face turn inside out to become the wolf but it was impossible to do on this schedule. To push the mechanism back in the mouth without the skin splitting needed a lot of surgical jelly. I can tell you! *The Elephant Man* was difficult enough but this film posed a whole new set of problems." To make sure that other major effects were done in time, like a full scale mechanical wolf, Tucker found he had to contract them out.

And another person who has been feeling the pinch is producer Steve Woolley. Woolley should be a model for us all. His career rise has been nothing short of meteoric since he started managing the Scala cinema when it was originally based just behind Godege Street underground station. I've known him for some time now and as another one of his talents has rested on the journalistic side, I know how upset he gets at misrepresentation, so I'd better watch my step!

Now he's on the other side of the fence, how does he feel? "As a producer I see all the grime and the toughness that is necessary to get the film right. And as you know it is so easy to be flippant about that. Being at the sharp end all the time one tends to get aggressively defensive about everything. You yourself have one way at looking at a film and now I find my view has shifted 180 degrees. Animals, children and special



Top: The scene that took a lot of risks and patience to achieve. Above: Danielle Dax as a wolf woman. Far Right: If you go down to the woods today... Part of a dream sequence. Right: Terence Stamp as the Devil, obscured by the car window pane, is chauffeur driven.

effects are one helluva package I can tell you! Being completely honest, this is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. I've had ulcers, nightmares, the whole works."

The reason why Palace entered the fraught area of film production is, according to Woolley, deceptively clear. "We made a bit of money from distributing *Diva* and *The Evil Dead* so we had to do the most logical thing with it. Palace is a young group of companies, an aspect that is reflected in the film, by the way, and we have been very lucky with our ability to choose such great titles to release in this country. It was very much a mix of the right place at the right time and having the guts to go with a film that other distribution companies deemed as uncommercial.

Diva was a breakthrough film as it is an art movie that has gained a far wider audience acceptance than that term usually allows for. The problem then was that other companies would be keeping an eye on us to see what titles we would show any interest in, and as we can't compete with the majors like EMI and VTC, the only way we could get a film for worldwide copyright was to make it ourselves. *The Company of Wolves* really came about because we wanted to channel our integrity into something we could nurture

along ourselves."

At a final cost of £1.5 million, *The Company of Wolves* does represent an enormous gamble for Woolley and Co, but one that could reap large dividends if it looks as good on the screen as it does on the studio floor.

In some ways, Palace are playing it safe by spearheading their production schedule with a genre film, still one of the most bankable commodities around. And Woolley is only too well aware of that. "I suppose that is true, but what do you want us to do? Please don't categorise it as a horror film though, because in the purest sense I don't think it is. I think of it in terms of *The Elephant Man* - accessible horror for a wide audience. Horror movies tend to fall into two categories these days. The tangents are either the *Friday the 13th* type or *The Thing* type. One is extremely nasty and tends to involve the disembowelling of teenagers and the other goes overboard on special effects. If you try and straddle those two aspects, as I think Schrader's *Cat People* did, and aim for an intelligent horror film, you tend to fall between two stools. Whether this is the right approach or not, this is what we're trying to do here - we are being nasty, but there is a good reason for it."



Woolley likes to expand this theory further. "With *The Company of Wolves*, we are trying to combine the wonder of *Divya* with the imagination of *The Evil Dead*. That's why there are two producers on this movie (the other being Chris Brown, the brother of socialite journalist Tina Brown) because we don't want to sacrifice the look, the design, or the beauty of it for the sake of special effects. At the same time, however, just because it's going to look good, move spectacularly and have a fabulous soundtrack we don't see why it shouldn't have great special effects as well. Art movies aren't supposed to have all the modern horror trappings. *Company* is a bit like *2001* and *Dr Strangelove* as we're trying to reinvent the fantasy genre so it will be treated with the same respect as, say, an anti-nuke film. Angela Carter herself thinks what we are doing is great and she's not really intellectual at all, she just loves movies like the rest of us."

Despite all the hard work he's putting into *The Company of Wolves*, Woolley knows that most of the first timers involved with the production are pulling it along with sheer guts. "It's an exciting experience for all concerned," he says. "It's Jordan's first studio movie. Brian Loftus, our lighting cameraman has never worked on a film before. Our production designer Anton Furst, although he worked on *Alien* and *Flash Gordon* is making his debut here and thinks it is the film he was destined for. For George Fenton, who wrote the music for *Ghandi* and *Bloody Kids*, this will be the score of his life. Everybody has been putting in that 10% extra that you often can't expect. There's the working till midnight and still getting in at 5 o'clock in the morning after waking up at 3 a.m. to scribble notes down. People don't normally do that on films but that is what they are doing here. We are pushing the personnel harder than they've ever been pushed before, including ourselves. Mike Hodges, the director, came to visit the set the other day and looked at the forest we have built on one of the soundstages and gave us a rough estimate of how much he thought it cost to build. He said £150,000, but in reality it cost a tenth of that because we know how people feel about this film from the polystyrene artists up. Everybody is throwing everything they've got into this picture. Even if it turns out to be a turkey, which it might well do, I could only have done

what I've done because I've really believed in this project. Nothing has ever been closer to my heart."

Long before *The Company of Wolves* was in production, I can remember getting a telephone call from Steve Woolley, asking me to name every film Chris Tucker had ever done. I should have realised at the time what it was all about. So much for investigative journalism! The truth of the matter is though that Woolley never had anyone else in mind for the special effects other than Tucker, as he explains. "Tucker was the first person we went to. Only three people have been involved in this project as long as Chris Brown and I have. The others are Jordan, Furst and Tucker. Tucker admittedly is getting a pittance for what he's trying to achieve which, to be honest, is to outdo such contemporaries as Rick Baker. When we realised the special effects would be one of our most costly areas, we isolated it and storyboarded the entire film—not once but twice. Chris Hobbs (of *Xtro* fame) did one set so when we went to Tucker we could confront him with concrete ideas, not nebulous airy-fairy ones. Tucker's side of the story is that he doesn't have enough money. Ours is we told him last August how much he could spend. That is the producer's dilemma. Once a price has been agreed, you expect it to be done for that."

In common with Tucker though, Woolley feels that the simplest ideas are the ones that work best and in that respect he feels that *The Company of Wolves* has more in common with the films of Michael Powell and *Un Chien Andalou*. "We are using the old-fashioned tricks, like moving the trees around in the forest. There's very little cheating really. For example we have a ballet dancer playing the huntsman for the prelude to the climactic transformation. We started shooting his naked back as the idea was it would split open at a certain point and the wolf would emerge. What we discovered was that this guy had muscles on his back that were far better than any special effect. It turned out to be the ultimate in natural bladder effects. It was simple, erotic and effective. This morning's shoot with Kathryn Pogson that you saw... that looked like a scene out of *The Birds* to me. An undefinable extra was definitely added and as a result, we get much more than just a bridging scene towards the wolf's head being chopped off."



While those scenes are examples of things you can't possibly script, one major problem turned out to be dealing with the live wolves themselves. In common with Tucker, Woolley had no idea how difficult these animals would be to handle in the studio environment. "The wolves were trained to a point but what we found was that they couldn't be expected to be ferocious and angry on cue. We have a scene where a wolf dives into a pit following a live duck and then tries to claw itself out. You can't use a real duck because of RSPCA regulations, so when you take the bird away, all you are left with is a mean wild animal cheated of its prey. Although we had endless problems we did manage to shoot the wolf shot of all time for this film. It's where Sarah Patterson is licked by one of them. It was a risky shot but Sarah was fantastic and it certainly paid off. A scene like that makes up for all the disappointment of not being able to get a lot more real wolf footage."

If all goes to plan, *The Company of Wolves* should be on release in Britain by September. I for one am counting the days mainly because I went down to Shepperton expecting to see an arty low budget pretentious piece of fluff being made. I should have had more faith in Palace, in retrospect, and now I'm just as excited about the whole film as the production seems to be. What Palace have been doing has been called "a renaissance for the British film industry" and that may not be too far from the truth. As Woolley says, "This is the way to make movies in this country. I want people to see us as pioneers in some respect. People think I'm cocky, I know. They say, 'Who's this new boy, the slob with the long hair?' What does he know about movies when I've been working in this industry for 20 years." I have been getting a lot of that. But most of the people we have dealt with have responded to our enthusiasm, so we are building up a close circle of associates for the next time out. There are some people who obviously won't gravitate towards us, like the British Film Institute, who see us as villains taking Angela Carter and selling her to millions of people when they want this audience for themselves. They all think we've taken the guts out of the project so I'm fully expecting people to say we sold out. But we don't deserve that after all the effort we have put in and the hard slog it has taken to pull *The Company of Wolves* off. ■

STAR TREK III

THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

INTERVIEW:

DeForest Kelley

Star Trek 3 - The Search for Spock is an important addition to the already legendary story of *Trek*. Not only does it mark the feature film debut of Leonard Nimoy as a director, but it proves that the *Star Trek* characters are popular enough even to transcend death. Hollywood-based writers Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier tracked down two of the most popular *Trek* stars, DeForest Kelley and William Shatner for interviews shortly after the new film opened in the United States.

In person DeForest Kelley is about a stone thinner than he appears on screen. He credits his slender build to a life of physical activity, although he admits that he's not been as active as he might over the last few years. He has an easy charm, which makes easy to understand why so many *Trek* fans have been taken, not only with the character he plays, but also with the man himself.

"I enjoyed watching *Star Trek III* better than I did *Star Trek II*," says DeForest Kelley. "I think this one comes closer to the TV series than anything we've done before. I don't know about Bill, or Leonard, or the rest of the cast, but it's difficult for me to look at a film, something that you're such a part of, and to really get the full impact of it. You're too close to it."

In this third film, the character of McCoy becomes pivotal to the story and, indeed, has some of the best lines in the picture. Kelley does not take credit for any of that. "I didn't really have any input in this one, except maybe a line here and there," he explains. "Of course, you try to do everything you can to help it. Leonard, Bill and I, and everybody else, have been very adamant on trying to get it back, as much as we can, to the feeling that we had in the series. That takes a lot of input. For example, they had written the line, 'That green-blooded sonovabitch, it's his



revenge for all those arguments he lost" and then, they took the 'green-blooded sonovabitch' out. So, I called Harvey and said, 'Why'd you take that line out?' He said, 'Well, De, it's a little strong. We decided it's a little much.' And I said, 'You're crazy! The fans'll love it, leave it in, please!' He said, 'Well, we'll see. So, I stayed on him about it, and they left it in. Now, I've heard that the audiences laugh so loud in the theatres, that they ride right over the 'it's his revenge for all those arguments he lost' which is funny, and they're practically losing it!"

"At the time we shot it, I told Leonard that we had to leave a space in between 'green-blooded sonovabitch' and the next line, because of the laugh. He said I was right and agreed to do it. But, we got into the filming and I never thought about it again, and neither did Leonard. So, we didn't cover it with a long beat, or some sort of a business we could have done until he said the next line."

At the very end of the film, Spock looks at McCoy and gives a look as if to say, 'I can't believe I had to mind meld with this guy!' According to Kelley, there was a lot of discussion about the scene between Nimoy and himself. "Before we even started the movie, Leonard took me over to show me the Vulcan set and told me that was where the end of the picture was going to take place. Then, I said, 'Leonard, about the ending. What do you think of that; when you're looking us all over, you come to McCoy, stand and look at him. Then, you reach forward as if to give him another mind meld, and McCoy says, 'Oh no! Not on your life!' He laughed like hell, and then threw it away, saying, 'You've got to be kidding!'"

"Then, toward the end of the picture, Leonard came to me and said, 'We've been talking about your suggestion.' After all this time, I'd forgotten and I said, 'What suggestion?' He said, 'My



approaching you at the very end. I really think it would be wonderful to get a laugh there. But, I don't know how we're ever going to be able to do it, with Bill. Because, you know, they'd had that dramatic scene. So, we fished around with this. Leonard said to me, 'We'll just try to ad lib something, and see how Bill takes it.' But Bill had done this very dramatic scene, and I just knew there was no way we could do it.

"When we actually shot the scene, Leonard stood there, looking at me, but he never did tell me to speak up and say to him, 'Why don't you put your hand up and do this?' So he walked around, waiting for me to say it and I'm looking at Bill, who's standing looking at him, wondering what the heck is going on. I said, 'Leonard, do you have an idea for this?' And he said, 'I was just trying to think of something.' I just couldn't say it, because I knew Bill was going to explode. Afterwards, Leonard

came over to me and said, 'Why didn't you say it?' I said, 'I couldn't, Bill would have never bought it.' So, we came to that look, which I think worked out well."

Another scene that Kelley had suggestions for was the bar scene which is somewhat reminiscent of the cantina scene in *Star Wars*. Kelley comments, "What we wanted to do is to open that scene outside, and have McCoy coming on the sidewalk, where he'd naturally encounter other aliens and people from other planets. As he enters, he stops and looks across the street, and we see a 'Star Wars Bar!' Once, the Lucas people were all there, and we were all talking about it. But they figured that they'd have to do a whole rigging of the set and it would be a whole big deal. That's what I wanted to see. I think that would have been wonderful and I wish we had done it."

Some times, Kelley discovered, scenes that seemed pivotal to the film were cut out for logical

reasons. "For instance, Bill and I did a scene in the elevator, which at the time was very important. It's McCoy's first appearance in the film, and he's behaving very strangely. Bill walks in and wonders what the heck is going on with him. A really weird scene, but it turns into a terrific scene. Now, it opens with McCoy in Spock's quarters. I saw why they cut it. Had the general audience seen the elevator scene, they would have anticipated the fact that it was McCoy quicker."

When asked if he had thought about possible storylines for *Star Trek IV*, after a momentary pause to think about it the actor says, "My guess would be that they're probably going to have to do something with the Enterprise. There's got to be a new ship, we know that. I would imagine that what they would do is not linger on Spock any longer. I think they will not even go into the fact of are you feeling better? They'll just get right into something that is an

INTERVIEW:

DeForest Kelley

► exciting story, and get on with it."

Although he himself has no desire to direct, Kelley points out that, "I wouldn't object to seeing Leonard direct again. It's very seldom where you see a good film where the actor is real actively involved in the film. The very fact that Leonard was out of this film until the end, gave him all that complete freedom for concentration that is needed for *Star Trek*. But, if he comes back and directs the next one, and has an active role, it might get to be a hassle. I've seen Leonard, stretched out on his back, still trying to give direction. So, it's difficult. I think it needs all of the concentration."

The multi-faceted actor was born in Atlanta, Georgia, in a Baptist family. He had sung in the church choir and then on a radio program on station WBS, which had earned him a singing engagement with Lew Forbes and his Orchestra at the Atlanta Paramount Theatre. He was 17 when, after graduating from high school, he made his first trip outside the state. "I came out to California when I was a young kid," remembers the actor, "to visit an uncle

southern origins and lanky looks made him ideal for the then-popular westerns, where he quickly developed into one of the most popular villains on the small screen, and soon on the silver screen as well.

"I had never played a 'heavy' before in my life," remembers Kelley, laughing. "I did a show called *You Are There* with a director that was a friend of mine. He said, 'De, I'm going to put you in as a heavy. It'll be great fun for you to do.' I said, 'Terrific!' So, he put me in 'Gunfight at OK Corral' on *You Are There* as the lead heavy, like Clanton. I wore a handle-bar moustache, chewed tobacco and spit... He was a mean cat! I just had a great time doing it, and did not think anything about it. When the thing played, I think practically every producer in Hollywood saw it! So, I went right into another western after that, called *Tension at Table Rock*."

Tension at Table Rock (1956) starred Cameron Mitchell and a young Angie Dickinson, and was directed by Charles Marquis Warren. Then, Kelley found himself back at the OK Corral in John Sturges's famous *Gunfight at OK Corral* (1957), in which, this time, he played Morgan Earp. Strangely enough, Kelley was to play the fateful western confrontation a third time, as one of the Clantons in *Star Trek's* "Spectre of the Gun," which must be

Bette Davis and Susan Hayward, called *Where Love Has Gone* (1964), by Harold Robbins, and he put me into that!"

In the meanwhile, Kelley had made a number of television pilots, including *Police Story* and 333 *Montgomery*, for Gene Roddenberry. The latter was about a criminal lawyer in San Francisco. "The reason I had done that one," remembers Kelley, "was because I had done the lead heavy in three Western pilots, and they all sold. So, the producer thought he'd put me in." Other television roles followed steadily, and Kelley almost inevitably guest-starred on most famous western shows of the times, such as *Bunsen*, *Zane Grey Theatre*, *Rawhide* and *Gunsana*.

"I did about five or six *Bonanza* episodes," remembers the actor. "Hoss Cartwright wore that big, tall hat. We were doing a scene, and I was in on it. He had a little, tiny radio, and he put it under his hat and turned it down very low. We stepped under the sound boom to start the scene, and the sound man said, 'Hold it! I'm getting some outside interference.' We'd step out and he'd get nothing. So, he'd say, 'Okay, it's all clear,' and we'd go back in. This went on about ten or twelve times and the sound man was going nuts! Finally, Dan Blocker took off his hat and there was the little radio stuck on his head!"

In 1966, DeForest Kelley was signed to play Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy on *Star Trek*. He describes the change over from horse opera to space opera as "a kind of an odd thing. About seven or eight weeks before I went into *Star Trek*, I hopped over into *Bonanza* and played a Doctor who operated on Hoss. But, it wasn't really too much of a switch. The big thing was just trying to adhere to the character and get him straightened around. It was a matter of adjustment. We had about four or five episodes to try and feel those things out, then it just fell into place."

Kelley describes how the character of McCoy was progressively created. "There was a character outline for him, layed out by Roddenberry. Naturally, I tried to take that into mind, as much as I possibly could. He was more or less described as a future day H.L. Mencken. Also, as the least military of any of the group, a man full of compassion, emotional and outspoken."

In fact, in both *Star Trek* "pilots," *The Menagerie*, and the original TV episode *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, the role of the Enterprise doctor was not played by Kelley as McCoy, but respectively by John Hoyt and Paul Fix. McCoy's first appearance was in *The Man Trap*. Kelley explains, "I started out in the series with nothing to do. When Gene showed me the first pilot, with John Hoyt and Jeffrey Hunter, and asked me what I thought of the doctor role, there was something about it that just knocked me out. When Hunter came in, and let his hair down with his doctor, the way they yakked it out... I thought that was so terrific, in a far-out film like this, to see people really hashing out an everyday problem. It just hit me like dynamite! I thought, 'You know, this could really be a good role if they opened it out.' So, I told Gene that I'd like to do it, provided that the role would open up to give that doctor more as it went on. He said, 'Well, De, You'll open it.' And I said, 'I'll damn well try!'"

"When we got started, I thought it would never open. It was like wading through ice or something to get results. But, it finally started to happen with the mail. The fans began to pick up on the character. The mail began to come. They opened it up for me. They insisted on more with the Spock / McCoy relationship. So, it was slowly building, and it got to the point where I thought that, if we had gone on for perhaps another two years, I think that, maybe, they would have alternated the leads, such as *Bonanza*



of mine. A guy, who was a director at the Long Beach Theatre Guild, saw me sitting in a restaurant. He wanted me to go over and read for a play, because he thought I was right for it. I did, and I ended up doing the play. So, I remained a member of the Long Beach Theatre Guild for about four or five years."

During the war, Kelley was spotted in a Navy training film by a Paramount talent scout. The result was a screen test and a contract. Kelley remained with Paramount for two and a half years. His first starring role in a feature film was in *Fear in the Night*, a 1947 thriller about a man who commits murder under hypnosis. Moving to New York, Kelley appeared in stock and on television, including shows such as *Playhouse 90* and *Schulz Theatre*. His

some kind of record!

He then starred in the civil war epic *Raintree Country*, directed by Edward Dmytryk (1957). Sturges saw him in *Raintree*, liked it, and again hired Kelley for *The Law and Jake Wade* (1958), which remains, to this day, one of his favorite Westerns. Dmytryk then came back with *Warlock* (1959), where Kelley acted with Richard Widmark, Anthony Quinn and Henry Fonda. Kelley names *Warlock* as another of his favorites, "I liked *Warlock* very much. It was a mood piece, and didn't make a lot of money here, but it was really a very good western, a classic. At the end of that, Dmytryk told me, 'Someday I'm going to get you out of this heavy thing.' I forgot all about it, but sure enough a picture came up with

used to do. One week it would have featured Leonard, the next week Bill, then me or Jimmy or somebody. Which I thought would have been a marvellous idea, to give each person a story."

Kelley sees McCoy as a part of himself, and sees the role serving as Kirk's conscience. "To a great degree, he (McCoy) is often the catalyst. He's the guy that can talk to Kirk in any manner or form that he wants to. Had I read the scripts many years ago, I would have picked McCoy out of all the characters to play. When Gene contacted me for *Star Trek* first, he gave me the part of Spock to read! I'm glad I didn't take it because I don't think anyone could have played Spock better than Leonard. He is truly magnificent in that role! As I think Bill is excellent as the Captain... I just like the character of McCoy for me, even though he's not as 'heavy' as the other two. I think he's closer to what I am. I think every actor injects some of his own personality in his part. There's a great deal of myself in McCoy like I think there's a great deal of Bill in Kirk, and a great deal of Leonard in Spock!"

The demise of *Star Trek* led to a Saturday Morning animated series, produced by Filmation in 1973. "That was kind of fun," remembers Kelley. "I didn't think so at first. I thought, 'Here we all are, a bunch of cartoon characters now. Poor little actors, out of work.' But Gene Roddenberry said to us, 'I feel that anything we can all do together to get *Star Trek* back will help it. Even this might create talk again.' So we did it, and he was right. It did create talk. It got marvellous reviews here. Then, the newsprint started to pick up on the phenomenon of *Star Trek* shortly afterward. Then, the conventions started. We were getting all this fan mail, as if we were still shooting the series. All those years the mail never stopped, and here we were, walking around, not in the series, getting all the acclaim of being in a hit series and not getting paid for it!"

After much hesitation, this popularity led Paramount to start production on *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. In spite of the film's commercial success, both Kelley and the fans were disappointed. "We originally were not going to do a motion picture when we did *Star Trek I*," explains Kelley. "We were going to do a ninety-minute television show. In one respect, I almost wish they had done that. Had maybe done six specials a year. That way, we could have done more things, more stories, instead of doing a film now, and then waiting a year and a half before another one can come out. I think it would have been better for the fans."

"Also, it was not easy to convince the Studio that, as successful as *Star Trek* was, the fans nevertheless had a deep feeling about the characters, and that you couldn't just ignore it. In my opinion, that was the mistake they made in the first film. They ignored the relationship that was so popular in the TV series. They were thinking in terms of motion picture, and it was hard for them to conceive that the success of *Star Trek* on TV was in its people. Basically, *Star Trek* is the story of a group of very qualified people, moving about centuries beyond, and doing a job, and doing it well. Having passion and warmth and caring for each other. Trying to seek out new worlds, without blowing each other apart. The series was certainly all that, but the first film was not. It relied too much on hardware and special effects."

Understandably, Kelley was wary when approached to do *Star Trek II*. "At first, I turned it down," he remembers. "I strongly disliked the first script that was handed to me. I felt it didn't work, so I had a big conversation with Harve. He was upset about it. I said to him that I'd rather not be in it, because the role was not meaningful, and the script just was not a good *Star Trek* script. He said, 'Well, what do you think we should do?' I said, 'I think you

should hire a writer that has written for *Star Trek* and rewrite it!' He looked at me real funny and said, 'Well, who would you hire?' I said, 'Gee, Harve. I don't know, I'm not in that line. Harlan Ellison's a good writer, get him...'"

But, in the end, Harve Bennett brought in Nicholas Meyer, himself a writer, who worked with him on the final polish of the script. "I feel that Meyer brought it to life and really made it a kind of *Star Trek* script," explains Kelley. "When he sent me that script, I said, 'That's more like it,' and I went with it."

Kelley had some more input in *Star Trek II*. "I told Harve that having Spock killed off on about page fifty of the script was all wrong. I said, 'You've lost the audience already. You've given this big blow to them that Spock's dead. Now you've got the second half of Bill wrestling with Ricardo Montalban. Who's going to sit still for that? That's not *Star Trek*.'"

"There's also a scene on the bridge where I start to beam down with Kirk. We're heading for the elevator, and Spock has a line. He says, 'Jim, be careful' as we walk into the elevator. I told Nicholas Meyer, the director, that McCoy would absolutely have something to say here. I said, 'This is ignoring McCoy completely. I think he should have said, 'We will!' " Well, Meyer bought it, so that line is *my* line, and was thrown in there by me. This is an example of an injection of trying to keep those characters in line. But many times, you can't do it. There are a couple of things in *Star Trek II* that I tried to sell quite heavily, such as Kirk and McCoy having a quiet moment together after Spock's death. I still miss it, and I think

the two recent *Star Trek* films, Kelley says, "Gene's falling into the background came more or less from *Star Trek I*. That picture just about drove him crazy. He became physically ill as a result of the frustration, not being able to convince the studio hierarchy of what he thought the film should be. The doctor told him he should take it easy or he might really be a sick man..."

The *Star Trek* phenomenon has also taken its toll on the members of the cast. Kelley is philosophical about it. "The show has a personality that's so unique and different, that it really doesn't bother me too much. Frankly, our audience, on the whole, is an extremely bright bunch of people. My dentist, my doctor, my lawyer are all the biggest trekkies in the world! So, as an actor, you really ask yourself what you really want. If you want to win an Academy Award, it's going to be awfully difficult to do. Or, if you want to be the all-pro actor and devote your life to theatre, well, that's a different ball game too... The other things that I have been offered just haven't appealed to me. The money doesn't have to be all that great, if it's something that you really want to do. That makes it a different ball game."

"I've done a lot of thinking about this. We've had all the adulation. I don't see how actors can have any more adulation than we've experienced with the fans. So, when I put all this together I think, 'Well, you're pretty damn lucky and should be very proud to be in it, and to be a part of it.' That's the way that I have decided to look at it. *Star Trek* has been a very good thing for me, it's given me a certain amount of



Opposite page: A portrait of DeForest Kelly as Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy. Above: Scotty (James Doohan), Chekov (Walter Koenig) and Admiral Kirk (William Shatner) in a scene from *Star Trek II: The Search for Spock*.

that would have been excellent. But you can't win them all!"

Star Trek II was an unqualified success, since it made over \$75 million at the box office during that first summer release. More important, perhaps, it was also a success with the fans. Kelley credits Bennett for this. "Harve deserves a lot of credit for this because he had to take *Star Trek* without ever having had anything to do with it, or being aware of the enormous cult following. He had to screen all those episodes. He began to read the fan mail, the fanzines. He even went as far as to correspond with some of these people. But as he did all this, he began to soak up *Star Trek* and speak the language."

Asked to comment on the role of Gene Roddenberry, described as that of a technical consultant on

security that I might have never gained otherwise. In this business, if the telephone doesn't ring, you don't work. It takes a lot of guts. I've waited many times, and it never did ring. So, you have to stop and look at it from a realistic standpoint. I've decided I'm pretty damn lucky to be a part of it."

Kelley adds, "I'm very content. I'm really very content the way I am. In fact, too much so for my own good. I hate myself for being that way. I really do. I can do nothing the best of anybody you've ever seen! Truly! I wonder where the heck the time goes. I don't finish the *L.A. Times* until one o'clock in the afternoon. But, if something came along, that I would say, 'Wow, that's really interesting, I'd love to do that,' I'd do it. The money wouldn't be that important."

William Shatner

William Shatner walks in the room, dressed in his *T.J. Hooker* uniform. *T.J. Hooker* is an ABC television series, in which Shatner plays the part of a crusty Los Angeles police sergeant. The actor has recently directed several episodes of the series.

In spite of the strangeness in taking about *Star Trek* with a cop of today, Kirk's personality quickly comes through and, soon, the uniform is all but forgotten. In between discussing his Canadian origins, his hobbies (breeding Doberman pinschers and quarter horses!) and eating a sandwich, Shatner analyses his contribution to *Star Trek III*.

The emphasis in the latter two *Star Trek* films has been more on the characters than on "the monster of the week" style story. Shatner sees that as a continuing trend, and is happy with it. "It's true that the series always used to have what I called the monster of the week," he says. "And, that's the nature of episodic television. We liked to think on the series, that there was a level of humanity and philosophy that stood out every so often. I think it was one of those elements that made it so popular."

Shatner indirectly blames the success of *Star Wars* for losing the spirit of the TV series in the first picture. "When I first heard the conversations about *Star Trek I*, it was directly after the success of *Star Wars*," he comments, "and I think the studio had always held back from doing anything with *Star Trek* because of their reluctance to believe, very naturally so, that something like that could have a viable economic life. When *Star Wars* hit, they decided to do a *Star Trek* in the same manner. So, *Star Trek I* was, in my view, an attempt to catch up to *Star Wars*, which meant making it big, spending \$40 million in special effects, etc. Although it made a lot of money, it was not a terrific film. It was good but it was not terrific. It was not in the tradition of *Star Trek*, because by that time, everybody in the management who knew what the elements were, had died off or moved away."

"Those of us who did know, and said, 'Come in for a close-up on this face...' were told, 'Close-up? This is movies! You guys don't know movies, you're used to television. We need grandiose, epic proportions.' So, of course, it being their money, they won and this mold of *Star Trek* was struck. But then, they had a conflict. It made them a great deal of money, but it was not *Star Trek*. And, they had spent so much money on it, even though it had large box office, that they didn't make much profit. So, they said, 'If we make a next one, let's spend less money and do what you guys want to do, a little humanity.'"

"I think it's an interesting confluence of economic and art that became these last two shows, which is that, at one point in the series when we didn't have much money for special effects, and that almost forced us to do more human stories. Now, we have more money, but they want to save it for special effects, so they're doing more human stories again!"



Shatner is very positive when he comments on working with the two previous directors who made the *Star Trek* pictures. "Each director has their own characteristics," he says. "Robert Wise came to that film with a justifiably legendary reputation. When he said 'We're going to put the camera over here and go over there.' You said, 'Yes, Sir!' because he had won all these Oscars, and it meant a great deal. One didn't question the father figure who knew all. Not that he didn't allow us certain freedoms, but he was Robert Wise, one of the great directors in Hollywood. Nick Meyer had written the script, and we were so in love with it, and we were so impressed with his creative abilities, that although it was only his second picture, we felt that his imagination should be given full flower. So, here he was, he had written the script, but he hadn't directed very much. Whatever help we could give him was proffered, and he would accept it or not accept it, depending on what he felt was right or wrong. But, he had written the script, and therefore brought to it another unquestionable aspect."

The relationship with Leonard Nimoy was, again, something different, for Nimoy had been a cast

member. Shatner explains how he dealt with this. "Leonard and I are dearest, good old friends. We have shared a mutual struggle with the Paramount management in various things that we struggled with. Whether it was the script, or a prop, or a concept, or even the dressing rooms, we were always united. We would go into a dressing room and say, 'Well, what do you think?' We'd have a plan whenever we had something to deal with management. We were together, we were brothers in flesh and in spirit. Now, suddenly my brother was saying, 'Well, I think you should do this.' And I was saying, 'Now, wait a minute, I think I should...' and I felt alone. So, there was an awkward period of time for me, and I don't think it was the same for Leonard. Or maybe it was. I never really talked to him about it. But, there was a period of a couple of weeks in which I felt alone in anything that I might have objected to. Although I had no reason to. Both Harve Bennett and Leonard Nimoy, and in fact the whole of Paramount's management, have given nothing but love and affection in most areas. But, from my point of view, it was more awkward in the beginning than with either of the other two directors. But, that

slowly erased itself as I realized that Leonard had a point of view and knew what he was doing."

Bringing Spock back to life, the central theme of *Star Trek III*, was, according to Shatner, an accident. "It was never anticipated," he says. "An accident happened. Maybe it wasn't an accident if you don't believe in accidents. It was really very strange. We were getting ready to do the death scene of Spock in *Star Trek II* — and this wasn't scripted — and Leonard pinched DeForest, and DeForest fell, then he put his hand on DeForest's forehead, and he was looking for something mysterious, so he put his hand up and said, 'Remember.' Then he took off and Spock died. Because, Leonard didn't want to play Spock any more."

The actor gives his own explanation for the death of Spock. "They argued and went through every possible permutation and combination to get Leonard to play Spock. Leonard said, 'Look, I've spent my adult life playing Spock. I want to go on to other things. It is stifling my career, stifling my creative impulses. I need to stop.' Very understandable. We were all very pained, but we understood completely. So this was the death of Spock. But, for some reason, Leonard said, 'Remember.' It was mysterious, it was Vulcan. . . It was meaningful to somebody in *Star Trek*, but we didn't know what. And, that was the end. Spock was dead, and the question was would there be a *Star Trek III* and how would we do it without Spock, and that was a whole other question. But, as far as everybody connected with *Star Trek* was concerned, Spock was dead."

"Then, the possibility of Leonard directing the film came up. Leonard said, 'If I can direct the film, I'll play Spock again.' Then the problem was, how do we bring him back to life? And, Harve Bennett in a tremendous creative leap, used that 'Remember' and brought him back in a very viable, valid, science fiction way. So, it was an accident, or fortuitous circumstances, or fate."

Shatner does not feel stifled playing Kirk, "because the character is different, because he is in effect the hero, and heroes are universal." He adds, "I never did feel stifled in the series. And, I think that any actor would have paid the management money, rather than received money, to tackle the roles that I've been asked to do in the last two films. I just love being Captain Kirk in the way they've been writing him."

When asked about *Star Trek IV*, Shatner professes ignorance. "It's totally open-ended, unless Harve has got some plots in his mind that he hasn't talked about. I have two things that I'd like to see. They're contrasted, and yet they're unified. One is that I'd like to see romance, and I'd like to see gritty realism, with hand-held cameras and dirt under the fingernails."

At the time of the interview, Paramount had not yet announced that, because of the very good box office figures generated by *Star Trek III*, it had again signed Nimoy to direct and write *Star Trek IV*. Asked about what director he would like to see on the series, Shatner replies "There are a number of bright, young directors that are making their mark now. It seems to me that the best thing that we can do with *Star Trek*, is to bring some brilliant, young director, where he wouldn't be afraid to try new things and not let stodgy tradition get in his way. I don't think I should mention any names. It's just that there are a group of fine directors who are doing the best work, and I'd love to see them come and do a *Star Trek* movie."

Shatner is evasive when asked if he would like to direct one of the future *Star Trek* films. "I didn't say that (I would), until recently!" comments the actor. "I'm so tied up with *T.J. Hooker* where I'm directing. . . But, the truth of the matter is that I'd like to. It's just a matter of whether I can."



INTERVIEW:

THE GREEK FILM TYCOON

a BLIND DATE with director Nico Mastorakis

Interview by Roger P. Birchall

Blind date, a new "hi-tech thriller", is very much a 'Hollywood' film. For a start *Blind Date* stars Joseph Bottoms, Kirstie Alley (the vulcan officer in *Star Trek II - The Wrath of Khan*) and Keir Dullea (of 2001 - *A Space Odyssey* fame, and soon to be seen reprising that role in 2010). It also features Lana Clarkson (the star of the New World release, *Deathstalker*) and James (Animal House) Daughton.

The plot concerns an advertising executive, Johnathan Ratcliff, who is obsessed with an old highschool flame who was brutally raped before his eyes. While supervising the shoot of a promo film he mistakes a beautiful model, Rachel, for his old girlfriend.

In the same city a psychopathic killer is on the loose. Known to the police as "the scalpel murderer", he hunts for young, pretty girls and savagely slashes them to death.

One night Johnathan follows Rachel and her boyfriend, Dave, to a park. Dave mistakes Johnathan for a peeping tom and runs after him. In the ensuing chase Johnathan smacks his head on a tree and is knocked unconscious. Waking up in hospital his girlfriend, Claire, tells him that he has lost his eyesight.

Johnathan finds adjusting to his new life of darkness difficult. He seeks the help of a famous neurosurgeon, Dr Steiger, who has developed a tiny computer which can transmit visual signals to the brain, bypassing the optic nerve. Despite the danger involved, Johnathan agrees to be the first person to try the revolutionary "Compuvision" and undergoes laser brain surgery. With the aid of this minute computer (cleverly disguised as a Sony Walkman) Johnathan is able to see again, but can only interpret the world as graphic green outlines. He can now record everything he sees on tape and replay it directly into his brain.

One night, he witnesses a murder, but due to the limitations of his Compuvision he cannot see details of the killer's face. Ultimately Johnathan is involved in a one-to-one confrontation with the scalpel murderer.

Throughout the story various voluptuous starlets undress, take showers and get slashed to death. All good clean fun...

Blind Date is unashamedly an exploitation film, and a cheap one at that (it was made for just \$1 million). But there is more to this movie than meets the eye. From a technical point of view *Blind Date* has all the visual excitement of a Dario Argento film, with stunning use of camera work and colour. Perhaps the biggest surprise of *Blind Date* is to discover it is a European production. The director is Nico Mastorakis, who wrote the screenplay with Fred C. Perry and also produced the film for his own company, Omega Pictures.



Photos by Steve Cook

Mastorakis has been producing and directing TV since 1967 and feature films since 1974. In 1978 he wrote and produced one of the top fifty all-time grossing films in America, *The Greek Tycoon* starring Anthony Quinn and Jacqueline Bisset. He also made *Demon Island* with James Earl Jones and Jose Ferrer, and the unusual science-fiction film *The Next One*, starring Keir Dullea and Adrienne Barbeau (see *Starburst* 46).

Starburst spoke to Nico Mastorakis while he was in this country to promote *Blind Date*.

STARBURST: *Blind Date* is a title along the lines of *Dressed to Kill*. Were you aiming to make a thriller in the Brian De Palma mould?

NICO MASTORAKIS: It was a little bit Brian De Palma-ish, yes.

Most De Palma films contain some visual tribute to Alfred Hitchcock. Are you influenced by Hitchcock's work?

Realistically Hitchcock is every director's influence, whether it be subliminal or conscious. Hitchcock has influenced all of us. We've been watching Hitchcock for so long, even if we don't realise we're doing Hitchcock we do Hitchcock.

With the new generation of filmmakers like De Palma I think today's audience may forget the suspense film roots of Hitchcock.

The young moviegoers? I am not sure if they have seen enough Hitchcock to draw the parallels. They're not the kind of movies that

run on TV all the time so the younger generation doesn't know Hitchcock except what they see through De Palma movies. It is inevitable when I film suspense I will draw the line towards Hitchcock. I don't like to draw the line towards De Palma because I don't like violence. I think if De Palma was doing *Blind Date* it would have a lot more explicit violence on the screen. With me it's subliminal: I like some violence because I think it is an element which is very cinematic, but I don't like to portray it explicitly. I don't like latex effects and heads exploding on the screen.

In Blind Date it is more effective, and disturbing, just because the violence takes place off-screen.



"Realistically Hitchcock is every director's influence, whether it be subliminal or conscious."

I think today directors are keen to put violence in movies just to satisfy the appetite of the video market, which is becoming increasingly hungry for violence. But I find it is more scary to keep the suspense high with subliminal violence, and the menacing forces being kept unseen and being suggested rather than exploited. That's what I tried to do in *Blind Date*. I don't know how much I succeeded but I did it as a conviction, not doing violence for the sake of violence.

The cinematography in Blind Date was stylish. The art direction reminded me of a Dario Argento film. Are you familiar with his movies?

Yes, I am. I have seen *Tenabrac* and some of his earlier films. Dario Argento is a European director who pays attention to the aesthetics of a movie. Fortunately, or unfortunately, most of the young directors when they do 'B' movies, and by saying 'B' movies I mean movies that don't have enough money to spend on big main production designers, tend to totally ignore the aesthetics. That is why most of the cheaper movies you get from America are dreadful looking. But it is not a special characteristic of the smaller movies. You can see a lot of the studio productions that look terrible, that haven't paid any attention to the art direction, to the cinematography, to anything. But Europeans tend to pay attention to that, and I'm a European and can't help it.

Blind Date contained as many red-herrings as an Argento film. It certainly keeps you guessing. I was convinced the killer was Keir Dullea's character, Dr Staiger, just from one shot of the surgical gloves.

You pinpointed one of the very discrete red-herrings in the picture. Because you had seen the killer putting on the gloves I thought that one shot would probably draw the attention of the audience to something completely different.

Keir Dullea seems to suddenly disappear from the story.

His part was to give that guy back his vision in an electronic way, and guide and advise him and from there on "disappear". You cannot keep a character alive in a picture when you're dealing with 90 minutes of which 40 is tense suspense and action. It's tough.

Will Joseph Bottom's main character, John Retcliff, return in a sequel as stated at the end of the Blind Date credits?

We are preparing a sequel, although it is not, as stated, called, *Run, Stumble and Fall* any more because it's not a commercial title. It's called *Ultrasonic*. Again the concept is very contemporary, it deals with the ultrasonic pregnancy examination of most of the pregnant women in this country, about 70 to 90 per cent. According to some sceptics it is very dangerous and is going to create a generation of mutants four generations in the future. The effects of ultrasonic on the foetus are not obvious now and the children are fine, but they're very worried about what happens four generations later because of the disturbance in the cells. They have studied the radiation from the actual infra-reds in the X-rays in comparison to the ultrasonic radiation. And although the ultrasonic radiation appears to be innocent and white they studied it under time-lapse photography and the movement of the cells seems very erratic and abnormal. So they think the cells in the foetus are very crucial. If you disturb the cells at this stage maybe four generations later it will



"I find it is more scary to keep the suspense high with subliminal violence, and the menacing forces being kept unseen and being suggested rather than exploited."

produce dramatic results and change the face of the population of the country.

So it's to be a kind of biological thriller?

That's right. It's about a genetic timebomb. We will take the computer vision gimmick in *Blind Date* a step further and now of course it's fully developed and doesn't look like a Walkman anymore. It is implanted in the guy. The only characteristic he retains is a tiny headset. Now he can see more detail, instead of outlines he can see in picture lines and he can adjust it to see more or less detail depending on how much power he wants to consume. He can also shake hands with someone and immediately he gets a reading of the skin tissue and the blood pressure and every other element.

Which he can play back?

Right! He can even tell when somebody is lying because the new unit has a built-in voice stress analyser and everything.

Why the idea of the Sony Walkman? Was it because of the current Walkman craze?

You got all the answers so right you surprise me! That is why I didn't choose to construct a new fantastic-looking, exotic unit.

Not a Brainstorm helmet.

Right. I thought so many kids around the world are wearing a Walkman they would relate to a hero with a Walkman headset and a case instead of just making him look very conspicuous to anybody.

I was wondering if Sony had money in the picture...

No. In fact they didn't even give us a Sony Walkman, we had to buy the one we used! *There was a lot of colour symbolism in Blind Date, such as the scene lit by red neon Coca-Cola sign. Red to symbolise danger. The type of art direction Nicolas Roeg uses.* I love Nicolas Roeg's work. From his early one, *Don't Look Now*, which I think is still my favourite. It has always been one of my favourite thrillers of all time. Subliminally everytime I do a thriller I think of that as an example of how to set the mood, how to set the chills and how to set everything. He has also been a magnificent cinematographer which he will never overcome. He always deals with great visuals on the screen. So I decided to follow that line when I was discussing the style with my cinematographer. He is very flexible, versatile and fast, and so we decided to go the difficult way which is to use the colours and the light as symbols. Although it is very subliminal and 90% of the audience won't get the symbolism of the light to me it worked.

There are a lot of beautiful women in Blind Date, most of whom end up slashed to death! Do you think this will attract an outcry from certain radical feminist groups, the same ones who threw paint at the screen when Dressed to Kill was released in this country. If so, does this concern you?

Any kind of reaction to my movies never concerns me, especially in this case because I'm a feminist at heart. I believe any kind of reaction is good publicity for the movie. I have no intents of violence towards women. I don't believe in it. I think through a long tradition in movies the feminine element is the most vulnerable. So you always have to have a female, preferably a beautiful one, in peril so that people can root for her, and a male who is strong and dedicated enough to



"To my mind in creating stories, scripts and books I have always believed that a hero is maybe the worst kind of coward that there is on earth."

save her life. That is exactly what *Blind Date* is about. It is an eternal myth that you have to acknowledge, it comes from the ancient Greek tragedies. What is violence against women anyway? I am against violence against anybody if it is committed in real life. Is the film's main character, John Retcliff, a hero?

He's an anti-hero. He's a circumstantial hero. ►

INTERVIEW:

Nico Mastorakis

What is a hero? To my mind in creating stories, scripts and books I have always believed that a hero is maybe the worst kind of coward that there is on this earth. It is totally unpredictable how he is going to react under pressure. In the case of *Blind Date* John Ratcliff is motivated by guilt of what had happened in the past and what he hadn't done to save his girlfriend from being raped. He pays back an unknown girl, although he is semi-convinced that she is not the one. So this is the stuff that makes heroes today.

A scene in *Blind Date* which I thought perhaps lost sympathy for John Ratcliff was where he took revenge on the three thugs who beat him up earlier in the film.

You may be right, but all heroes are human and they have instincts and feelings of revenge as well as their good instincts. I don't think that when you show someone on the screen completely idealised, where he does all the good things on earth but nothing bad, he isn't believable anymore. When we tested the film in America the audience cheered in that scene. It was such a nasty scene where the bad guys beat up someone who is blind and helpless and they all felt he owed it to them.

You are based in LA now, do you have offices in London?

I come to London only for post-production. I use the English facilities and the quality of post-production as a must in my movies. If I can use English crews I do, which is very rare because they're expensive.

How healthy is the film industry in your native Greece?

Not healthy. If you're talking about the local industry they are producing pictures between 40 and 70 thousand dollars per picture which gives them a poor result on a three week shoot. Bad comedies, slapstick, stuff like this, which can bring the money back in the local market. But they don't have a vision of putting in more money and making international scripts with more international orientated directors, American or English stars so they can hit the English-speaking market. It's not good enough.

What was your original inspiration for the story of *Blind Date*?

If you're trying to pinpoint a seat of inspiration I don't really know. I think that it started working within me from the visuals. In a small movie, that Hollywood could never have made for the money that we made it, I wanted to put exciting visuals as an example of what you can do when you combine great hi-tech elements with a good viable story. I started working on the visuals first, and I tried to fit them in with the concept of the story.

Where were the film's computer graphics created?

Everything was done in England. All the post-production.

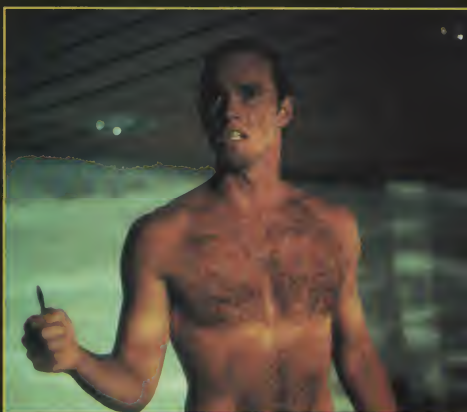
How close is that actual concept of a blind man "seeing" with a headset?

I think it is just around the corner. I was watching television in the United States the other day and I saw a similar process, only it's bulkier. They had the plug implanted into his skull to make him see through a video camera and transfer all the signals processed into his brain and he could see blurred images. So it's quite realistic.

And get it smaller and smaller.

Well, with all the digitalised stuff they're putting out today they will come up with it within the next three years.

How would you like to see *Blind Date* sold?



Above: James Daughton in an atmospherically shot scene from *Blind Date*. Below: Michael Mowe, Gerald Kelly and Jerry Sandquist as a sadistic subway gang who terrify our blind hero. Opposite page: clockwise from top left: A portrait of ex-Violent Krimis filley-in, Claire Simonson. Danger signs for Joseph Bottoms as John Ratcliff as he finds himself on a perilous ledge. One of the models seen brutally in *Blind Date*. Wearing his *Compulsion* headset John Ratcliff is ready to face the psychopathic "scalped murderer".



In America the film is being sold wrong. The distributors there have chosen the approach of a slash picture. The theory is that there is enough audience initially to be drawn to the theatres by a slash film, and of course that audience will be greatly surprised when they see *Blind Date*. Probably word of mouth is going to draw more audiences. Their theory is that every major hi-tech thriller has failed to make it big at the box office. They mention *Altered States* as an example, and *Brainstorm* and *Tron*, which were three major disappointments box-office wise. I think they're wrong. To the extent that if I could I would like to control which way the picture is put out. In this country I think the picture is put out in the right way because the element of suspense and murder-mystery is there. We suggest to all our buyers around the world to go with the

hi-tech murder-mystery concept. I'm happier with that.

You have made mainly "adult" films. Would you like to direct a family film?

Adult? What exactly is the terminology for an adult film? I mean if you do a film for adults the kids want to see it.

Would you like to make an E.T.?

I love Spielberg and anything he does I would love to have done it. I am not envious but when I see a Spielberg film I think if only I could have done something like that myself. I wouldn't do anything that is "pink", like naive for the sake of family entertainment, like the Disney-type of pictures. I like to make movies that entertain me primarily. I wouldn't make anything boring. It is a good measurement of what you want to do in life. If you feel you're going to be bored - forget it!



BLIND DATE

THE A-Z OF ITALIAN FANTASY

Part Two: From Kinski to Zombies
A Starburst Index by Alan Jones



The giganic form of Richard Kiel as The Humanoid (1978), directed by Aldo Lado (aka, George B. Lewis).

Continuing Alan Jones alphabetical appraisal of one of the world's largest film industries..

K

KINSKI, Klaus (Real name Nicol us Nersynski.) Kinski made his name in numerous spaghetti-westerns until he broadened his villainous spectrum to include horror films as well. He sums up his career succinctly in his autobiography, published in France in 1976, called "Dying to Live" in which he says he hated always being categorised. After *Nosferatu*, *Android* and *Fitzcarraldo* however, that is no longer true. *Coplan* saves his skin/Devil's Garden (1967), *Target for Killing* (1967), *Count Dracula* (1970), *Venus in Furs* (1970), *Creature with the Blue Hand* (1971), *Cold Blooded Beast* (1971), *In the Grip of the Spider* (1971), a remake of *Danse Macabre*, *La Morte Sorride All'Assassino* (1973). (Others: *Five Golden Dragons*, *Psycho Circus*, *Puzzle of the Red Orchid*).

KRAMER, Frank (Real name Gianfranco Parolini). Kramer has been working in the industry since 1945 and is renowned for his comedic flair and continous action talent. His major claim to fame is in instigating the *Sabata* series of westerns starring Lee Van Cleef. *Goliath against the Giants* (1953, screenplay only), *The Fury of Hercules* (1960), *Samson* (1960), *The Old Testament* (1961), *The Destruction of Her-culanum* (1962), *The Ten Gladiators* (1963), *Three Fantastic Supermen* (1966), *Five for the Hell* (1968), *UFO Series* (1971), *We are no Angels* (1975), *God's Gun* (1976), *Yeti* (1978).

L

LADO, Aldo. Director of the infamous *Night Train Murders/Late Night Trains/The Second House on the Left* (1975) which is still banned in this country due to its extreme view of sexual violence. A sequel of sorts was made starring Florinda Bolkan called *Terror*. In 1972 Lado directed Barbara Bach in a Black Magic based film called *Butterfly of Night* and in 1978 directed *The Humanoid* under the pseudonym of George B. Lewis.

LEE, Margaret. An English-born actress who was touted as the new Marilyn Monroe and has appeared in over 75, largely forgettable, movies. She married Gino Malerbo and had an affair with singer Kim Brown until a jail sentence in Morocco for smuggling marijuana put an end to any aspirations she had about becoming a serious actress. *Fire Monsters against the Sons of Hercules* (1962), *Samson vs. The Pirates* (1963), *Agent 077* (1966), *Kiss the Girls and make them Die* (1966), *Secret Agent Super Dragon* (1966), *Ghosts-Italian Style* (1967), *Coplan Saves His Skin* (1967), *Dorian Gray* (1970), *Venus in Furs* (1970), *Cold Blooded Beast* (1971), *Night of the Blood Monster* (1971).

LENZI, Umberto. (Pseudonym Humphrey Humbert). A bread and butter director who disguises his evident lack of talent with outrageous storylines that efficiently pull him through. For proof, see the ridiculous, but effective *Cannibal Ferox* (1980), *Samson and the Slave Queen* (1963), *Temple of the White Elephants* (1964), *The Invincible Masked Rider* (1965), *Sandokan the Great* (1965), *Super Seven Calls the Sphinx* (1967), *Paranoia* (1968, with Carroll Baker), *Spasmo* (1976), *Deep River Savages* (1979),

Eaten Alive (1980), *Cannibal Ferox* (1980), *Nightmare City* (1980), *The Ironmaster* (1982), *Daughter of the Jungle* (1982).

M

MARGHERITA, Antonio. (Pseudonyms: Anthony Daisies, Anthony Dawson). Born Rome 19th September 1930. Another director in the major league of early '60s inspirational masters. His early work always had atmosphere, taste and refinement, all attributes sadly lacking in his more recent output but he is a past master at disguising low budgets often turning this facet to his advantage. *Assignment - Outer Space* (1960), *Battle of the Worlds* (1961), *The Golden Arrow* (1962), *Castle of Blood* (1964 and shot using television techniques), *The Long Hair of Death* (1964), *Castle of Terror* (1964), *Hercules Prisoner of Evil* (1964), *Anthrax the Invincible* (1964), *Wild Wild Planet* (1965), *War between the Planets* (1965), *Snow Devils* (1965), *War between the Planets* (1965), *Lightning Bolt* 1966 and one of the many spy films Margherita produced on a 9-14 day schedule), *Agent 007* (1966), *La Morte Viene dal Pianeta Aytin* (1967), *The Young, the Evil and the Savage* (1968), *The Unnaturals* (1969), *The Bloody Sorcerer* (1970), *Mr Super-Invisible* (1970), *In the Grip of the Spider* (1971), *Bed of a Thousand Pleasures* (1972), *Seven Dead in the Cat's Eyes* (1972), *Killer Fish* (1978), *The Last Jaws* (1979), *The Last Hunter* (1980), *Raiders of the Golden Cobra* (1982), *Bermuda Triangle Monsters* (1982), *The World of Yor* (1982). In 1968, Margherita switched to producing westerns like *Django* and in 1978 worked on the special effects in *The Humanoid* and likewise on subsequent films of his own. He is at present making *Final Executor* (1983) and an *E.T.* inspired film, *Space in 3D*.

MARTINO, Luciano. (Pseudonym: Martin Hardy). Screenplay writer turned producer and director. *Warrior Empress* (1960, produced), *Duel of the Titans* (1961, scripted), *Night is the Phantom* (1963, scripted), *Son of Hercules in the Land of Fire* (1963, scripted), *The Demon* (1963, scripted), *The Invincible Masked Rider* (1965, scripted), *The Spy Killers* (1965, produced), *The Murder Clinic* (1966, scripted), *Erotic Blue* (1972, produced), *Excite Me* (1972, produced), *The Ironmaster* (1982, produced). Directed *Next!* (1971). The latter film was produced by Sergio Martino and as both of their names crop up together regularly, it is safe to assume they are related in some way.

MARTINO, Sergio. (Pseudonyms: Christian Plummer, Julian Baryl). A good pulp director whose exciting films make up in exuberance what they lack in finesse. *The Spy Killers* (1965, scripted only), *Excite Me* (1972), *Torso* (1975), *They're Coming to get You* (1975, filmed in "Chillorama"), *Prisoner of the Cannibal God* (1978), *The Great Alligator* (1979), *Island of Mutations* (1979, called *Screamers* in the US with added prologue directed by Gary Graver). In 1982 he made a 7 episode, 6½ hour long television mini-series called *The Etruscan Enigma* that was also released in a condensed version theatrically. Also, *We Do Our Worst* (1982), *Don't Play With Tigers* (1982), and *2099: After the Fall of New York* (1983).

MARTINO, Alberto De. (Pseudonym: Martin Herbert). An efficient director renowned for being a fast worker - but not much else. Most of his work has

been for producer Edmondo Amati. *Perseus against the Monsters* (1962), *The Blanchville Monster* (1963), a *Poel/Premature Burial* (rip-off), *Hercules vs the Giant Warriors* (1964), *Operation Kid Brother!* (O.K. Connery 1967, featuring Sean's brother, Neil, Bernard Lee, Lois Maxwell, Adolfo Celi and Daniella Bianchi), *The Antichrist* (1974), *Holocaust 2000* (1977), *Return to Atlantis* (1977), *Blast of the Second Galactic Empire* (1978), *The Invisible Man* (1979), *Puma Man* (1979).

MASTROCIINQUE, Camillo. (Pseudonym: Thomas Miller) Only included here because he worked with both Christopher Lee and Barbara Steele, but the less said about his direction, the better. *Crypt of Horror* (1963), *An Angel for Satan* (1965).

MORRICONE, Ennio. The most prolific composer in the world with over 800 recordings to his name. His themes for spaghetti-westerns have made him a legend in his own lifetime - in fact it was John Carpenter's love of his music for *Once Upon A Time in the West*, which he used in his wedding ceremony, that earned him the job of composer for *The Thing* (1982). His horror/thriller scores have often added a touch of class to otherwise lacklustre material. He often works in tandem with Bruno Nicolai - a composer in his own right - who duals as his orchestrator and musical director. *The Spectre* (1963), *The Martians Arrived* (1964), *Nightmare Castle/The Faceless Monster* (1965), *Agent 505* (1966), *Operation Kid Brother* (1967), *Danger: Diabolik* (1968), *A Quiet Place in the Country* (1968), *The Red Tent* (1969), *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1969), *Maddalena* (1970), *When Women Had Tails* (1970), *Cat O'Nine Tails* (1970), *When Women Lost Their Tales* (1971), *The Black Belly of the Tarantula* (1971), *Four Flies on Grey Velvet* (1971), *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin* (1971), *What have you done to Solange?* (1971), *The Cannibals* (1971), *Bluebeard* (1972), *The Killer* (1972), *Slap the Monster on Page One* (1972), *The Antichrist* (1974), *Night*

Train Murders (1975), *Holocaust 2000* (1977), *The Humanoid* (1978), *Marco Polo* (1982), *Treasure of the Four Crowns* (1982).

N

NICOLAI, Daria. A striking actress who is married to Dario Argento. She works mainly in the Italian theatre and her favourite film is surprisingly not one of her husband's but Mario Bava's *Shock* (1977) which, as the central character, gave her the chance to give full reign to her formidable acting talents. She met Dario when they were working together on *Deep Red* (1975) and subsequently collaborated on the screenplay of *Suspiria* (1976) with him. She also appeared in *Inferno* (1979), *Tenebrae* (1982), a television movie called *Portrait of a Veiled Woman* that was released theatrically in the US and more recently, a television series called *The Life of Verdi*. When commitments forced her to relinquish her role in William Lustig's *Maniac* (1981), her part was played by Caroline Munro.

O

ORTOLANI, Riz. A composer who is probably known for one piece of music above all others - the theme from *Mondo Cane* (1961) that became the worldwide bestselling standard "More". *Ursus in the Valley of Lions* (1961), *Castle of Terror* (1963), *Castle of Blood* (1964), *Spy in your Ear* (1965), *Ecco* (1965), *Lightning Bolt* (1966), *The Bersagliere's Girl* (1966), *The Chastity Belt* (1968), *In the Grip of the Spider* (1971), *Puzzle of the Silver Half Moon* (1972), *The Amazons* (1973), *Cannibal Holocaust* (1979), *Madhouse* (1981), *Zeder* (1983).



Ursula Andress is menaced by unfriendly natives and finds herself Prisoner of the Cannibal God in Sergio Martino's 1978 film.

P

PETRI, Elio. The director who unleashed on the world Ursula Andress in a bullet firing bra for his film *The Tenth Victim* (1965) which depicted a turgid and incredible look into the future. He became increasingly more political in his films and investigation of a citizen above suspicion won him the Oscar in 1969. *The Assassin* (1961), *A Quiet Place in the Country* (1968), *We Still Kill the Old Way* (1968), *The Working Class Goes to Heaven* (1971), *Todo Modo* (1976). He died recently.

Q

QUALCOSA STRISCIA NEL BUIO. The Italian title for Mario Colucci's nonsensical spiritualist/whodunnit saga, *Something Creeping in the Dark* (1970). The star of that film, and countless others, was B-movie veteran Giacomo Rossi-Stuart/Jack Stuart. Other actors of his natura proliferate like George Eastman/Luigi Montefiore and Howard Ross/Ranato Rossini but it is in the lower budget area of film making that Rossi-Stuart always crops up in. He is neither a good or bad actor but always serves his roles well. *Death Comes From Outer Space* (1958), *Caltiki the Immortal Monster* (1959), *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1961, Italian direction by Sergio Laona), *The Last Man on Earth* (1963), *Weapons of Vengeance* (1963), *Temple of the White Elephants* (1964), *War between the Planets* (1965), *Snow Devils* (1965), *Curse of the Dead* (1966), *Perry Grant - Agent of Iron* (1966), *The Glass Sphinx* (1967), *Knives of the Avenger* (1967), *Phantom Assassin* (1971), *The Night She Arose From The Tomb* (1971), *La Morte Sorride All'Assassino* (1973), *Weekend Murders* (1970), *Crimes of the Black Cat* (1972)

R

RIZZATI, Walter. Composer of the scores for *The House by the Cemetery* (1981) and *Bronx Warriors* (1982). He is a popular orchestra leader in the James Last mould who has released numerous easy-listening albums like *Manhattan*, *Doggybag*, *The Night is Young* and *Walking on Eggshells*. He has also scored non-garage films like *Lo Sciatto* and *Piero La Pesta Alla Riscossa*.

ROSSI, Giannetto De. In the special make-up field, Italy has many leading artists like Maurizio Trani, Franco Ruffini and Giuseppe Ferranti. Other names like Carlo Rambaldi and Isidoro Raponi have made the grade and we are now seeing their names on big-budgeted Hollywood product. Destined to join them is Giannetto De Rossi whose special make-up effects are often the sole point of interest in the films at the lower-budgeted end of the market. On set observers have called his methods ruthlessly perfectionist as they cite the incident that occurred while shooting *The Beyond*. A zombie extra actually had part of his shoulder blown away due to the close proximity of a gun prop, but this did not deter De Rossi from asking the extra if he would do a second

take even though the actor was in agony. Perhaps that is precisely why his work looks so realistic. The son of Alberto De Rossi who did make-up on *The Bible* (1966) and *The Last Valley* (1971), Giannetto De Rossi's main work has been for director Lucio Fulci. *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), *When Women Had Tails* (1970), *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (1971), *Evil Thoughts* (1976), *Fellini Casanova* (1977), *The Humanoid* (1978), *Zombie Flesh-Eaters* (1979), *City of the Living Dead* (1980), *Zombie Horror* (1980), *Cannibal Apocalypse* (1980), *The Beyond* (1981), *The House by the Cemetery* (1981), *Piranha 2: Flying Killers* (1982). He also worked uncredited on *Inferno* (1979) and *Contamination* (1980) and is not to be confused with Gino De Rossi who did the make-up for *Holocaust* 2000 (1977)

RUSTICHELLI, Carlo. After Ennio Morricone, the second most prolific composer in Italy whose work is inseparably linked to the career of Pietro Germi. He was born in Modena, December 24th 1916 and has been working in the industry since 1941 after studying the piano and violinello. *Duel before the Mast* (1951), *Black 13* (1953), *Captain Fantasma* (1953), *Death Comes From Outer Space* (1958), *The Facts of Murder* (1959), *Jason and the Golden Fleece* (1959), *Warlord of Crete* (1960), *The Lost Kingdom* (1961), *Queen of the Nile* (1961), *Psycosissimo* (1961), *Romulus and the Sabines* (1961), *Sword of the Conqueror* (1961), *Sons of Thunder* (1962), *Triumph of the Son of Hercules* (1963), *The Giant of the Lost Tomb* (1963), *Hercules Attacks* (1963), *The Mighty Khan* (1963), *Night is the Phantom* (1963), *Tiger of Terror* (1964), *Blood and Black Lace* (1964, under the name of Carl Rustic), *The Return of Sandokan* (1964), *Hercules of the Desert* (1964), *The Mystery of Thug Island* (1965), *Curse of the Dead* (1966), *Il Terribile Ispettore* (1969), *Satyricon* (1969), *The Odyssey* (1971, television score), *Assassino sul*

Tevere (1980), *Throne of Fire* (1982), *Apocalypse of an Earthquake* (1983)

S

SACCHETTI, Dardano. A screenplay writer whose name is always somewhere in the credits of the major Italian genre releases. *Bloodbath* (1971), *Cat O'Nine Tails* (1971), *The Psychic* (1976), *Shock* (1977), *The Last Hunter* (1980), *City of the Living Dead* (1980), *The Beyond* (1981), *The House by the Cemetery* (1981), *Bronx Warriors* (1982), *The New York Ripper* (1982), *The Ironmaster* (1982), *Possessed* (1982), *Rome 21st Century: Ben Hur vs Spartacus* (1983).

SAMPERI, Salvatore. The spearhead director who filed a lawsuit with Italian television for showing his films with too many commercial interruptions. His output consists of visual fantasy gags. *Thanks Aunt Malizia*, *Ernesto, Scandalo*, *Vanial Sin*, *Sturmtuppen* (1981), *Sturmtuppen No 2* (1983) and *Here come the Monsters* (1983), the latter a take-off of the horror genre containing the characters of Dracula, the Werewolf, the Mummy, Frankenstein and Nosferatu.

SIANI, Sabrina. Also known as just Sabrins. Most young, ingenua actresses have a short lifespan in the Italian exploitation industry. Flavours of the months have included Tisa Farrow, Janet Agren, Katherina McCall and Clio Goldsmith. The latest to join these ranks is Siani who has made more films in the last few years than most actresses can claim in a lifetime. *Cannibal World* (1980), *Ator the Fighting Eagle* (1982), *Tiger Man* (1982), *Sword of the Barbarians* (1982), *Conquest* (1982), *Throne of Fire* (1982),



The distinctive features of the "Queen of Horror", Barbara Steele, with an unfortunate victim of *The Fearless Monster* (1965).

Blue Island (1982), *Sahara Gold* (1982), *Daughter of the Jungle* (1982).

STEELE, Barbara. The English actress who became the *Queen of Horror* by default than design. "I began with too many horror films," she is quoted as saying, "I hate graves and all those things", and even though she has hardly seen any of the films listed, her presence in any film gave it a quality that is indefinably her own. *The 39 Steps* (1959), *Saphira* (1960), *Revenge of the Vampire* (1960), *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1961), *The Terror of Dr Hitchcock* (1962), *The Spectre* (1963), *8½* (1962), *The Iron Captain* (1963), *Castle of Blood* (1964), *The Long Hair of Death* (1964), *Terror Creatures from the Grave* (1965), *The Faceless Monster* (1965), *An Angel for Satan* (1965), *L'Armata Bracaleone* (1965), *Revenge of the Bloodbeast* (1965), *Curse of the Crimson Altar* (1968), *Caged Heat* (1974), *Shivers* (1976), *Piranha* (1979), *The Silent Scream* (1980). An interesting abandoned project in 1965 was the teaming of Steele and Christopher Lee for *Lady Diabolika*.

STENO, Stefano. Usually only known by his surname. A director who has been working since 1940 and who primarily makes comic spoofs – in the '60s these were always with the famous comedy duo Franco and Ciccio. *Uncle was a Vampire* (1959), *Psycoisissimo* (1961), *O.K. Nero* (1961), *A Monster and a Half* (1964), *The Superdiabolical* (1965), *Dorelik* (1967), *The Cavalier with the Red Nose* (1967), *Transplant* (1970), *Dr Jekyll & Gentle Signora* (1980), *Ideal Adventure* (1982), *Banana Joe* (1982), *Don Calisto* (1982). Steno's son, Carlo Vanzina, is now working in the giallo field.

T

TESSARI, Duccio. Born Genoa, 11 October, 1926. A director who started out as a cameraman and documentary filmmaker whose major claim to fame is his influential political spaghetti westerns like the *Ringo* series. Wrote *Colossus of Rhodes* (1960), *Colossus and the Amazons* (1960), *Hercules Conquers Atlantis* (1961), *Duel of the Titans* (1961), *Goliath and the Vampires* (1961), *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1959). Directed *Sons of Thunder* (1961), *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* (1965), an Arabian Nights fantasy called *For Love... For Magic* (1966), and *Man Without a Memory* (1975) – the only Italian film to feature a chainsaw.

U

ULTIMA PREDAL DEL VAMPIRO L'. The Italian title for Piero Regnoli's *The Playgirls and the Vampire* (1960) which introduced Walter Brandi (Walter Brandt) to the genre who was to specialise in vampire films for a while. The film had a sequel, Renato Polsell's *The Vampire and the Ballarina* (1961) but Brandi's most serious bid for consideration is Roberto Mauri's *Slaughter of the Vampires* (1962). He also starred with Barbara Steele in *Terror Creatures from the Grave* (1965) and *Bloody Pit of Horror* (1965), the latter directed by Massimo Pupillo who also produced Brandi's films under the pseudonyms of Max Hunter and Ralph Zucker as well as others like *The Devil's Wedding Night* (1973). Brandi co-produced the 1968 film *Eve the Savage Venus*.



"Who threw that pizza?" asks this character in *Zombie Creeping Flesh* (1980), just one of the many living dead films to come from Italy.

V

VALLI, Alida. A striking actress born in 1921 under the real name of Alida Maria Altenburger. She returned to Italian films in 1947 after a Hollywood career where she was known simply as Valli. One of her greatest films is Visconti's *Senso* (1955). Her horror films have rarely used her to such good effect. *Death Travels Too Much* (1965), *Oedipus Rex* (1967), *Blood* (1971), *The Devil and the Dead* (1972), *House of Exorcism* (1973), *It's Nothing Mummy, Only A Game* (1973), *The Antichrist* (1974), *Tender Dracula* (1974), *Suspense* (1976), *Inferno* (1979).

W

WEEKEND MURDERS. Michele Lupo's "Ten Little Niggers" whodunnit from 1970 that had the peculiarity of being set in England. Anna Moffo and Lance Percival (I) were the stars and it proved, along with Jorge Grau's *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (1974), that the English ambience definitely did not match the Italian sensibility. Far more successful are those Italian films that have American location work.

X

X CERTIFICATE. Most Italian horror films are severely cut and all are given X (18) certificates. Not commonly known is that the films in their country of origin often have very heavy censorship problems as well. The following list comprises the titles that have given the British censors most headaches. Still banned outright are: *The Insatiabiles* (1970) purportedly because it contained the most savage beating up scene ever committed to film, *99 Women* (1969) because of excruciating torture and mutilation depicted as happening in a women's prison, *Deep Red* (1975) due to the stylised violence and *Night Train Murders* (1975) as it features extreme sexual violence. Badly cut were: *Revenge of the Vampire* (1960), eventually released in 1968 with most of the prologue excised, *Mondo Cane* (1961) although it was shown by local authorities, *Blood-bath* (1971) which lost over ten minutes when it was

eventually released in the UK years later, *Savage Man, Savage Beast* (1976) which lost a lot of the grosser documentary footage, *Crimes of the Black Cat* (1972) because it took a Hitchcockian shower scene to the limits, and Pasolini's infamous *Salo* (1977) due to its degradation, both human and sexual. All the horror greats have suffered in the censorship respect and it certainly isn't getting any better.

Y

YOR, The World of. (1982). The film that Columbia have put a massive publicity campaign behind in America. Margheriti's film doesn't deserve it but this action looks set to open the floodgates for the rash of similar films now taking over the Italian market place. Like *Thor* (1982) by Tonio Ricci, *She* (1982) starring Sandahl Bergman with music by Rick Wakeman and Justin Hayward, both *Ator's* (1982), *Gunan the Invincible/Sword of the Barbarians* (1982), *SuperHuman* (1982), *Zeus Against the Universe* (1982) starring Gordon Mitchell as Kronos, *The Lost City* (1982), *Adam and Eve* (1982), *The Throne of Fire* (1982), *The Crystal Sword* (1982), *Barbarians 2000* (1983), *Warrior of the Lost World* (1983), *Attica* (1983), 2020: *Texas Gladiators* (1983), *Master of the World* (1983), *Rome 21st Century: Ben Hur vs Spartacus* (1983)

Z

ZOMBIES. Or ZZZzzz: judging by the Starburst letters column regarding this staple of the Italian film industry. But for the first time, a complete list of all the Italian films to have featured zombies or the living dead. *Rome vs Rome/War of the Zombies* (1963), *Terror Creatures from the Grave* (1965), *Kingdom in the Sand* (1965), *Il Dio Serpente* (1970), *The Orgy of the Dead* (1971), *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (1974), *Leonor* (1974), *Zombies: Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Zombie Holocaust* (1979, parts of which became *Dr Butcher M.D.*) *Island of the Zombies* (1979), *Zombie Fleshheaters* (1979), *City of the Living Dead* (1980), *Sexy Erotic Love/Exotic Love* (1980), *Zombie Creeping Flesh* (1980), *Nightmare City* (1980), *Zombie Horror* (1980), *The Beyond* (1980), *The House by the Cemetery* (1981), *Zombie 3D* (1983)

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Oh Brother!

John Hurt, young Suzzana Hamilton and Cyril Cusack started shooting *1984* — as Winston, Julia and Charrington — on April 2. The film's real talker, however, was not announced until the day before the rain invaded Cannes six weeks later. I gather many fine actors had been called but, obviously, in the end, one only could be chosen as O'Brien, the relentless interrogator of poor Winston Smith. And I have to say my interest in the movie has waned considerably since hearing Richard Burton is O'Brien. Oh dear, dear, dear...

Granted, the role demands an actor who can handle long speeches. Granted, director Michael Radford can cut from the Burton visage (if not the voice) to John Hurt's perfectly ravaged-looking Winston. Granted, it's a plum role and an old pro is hardly going to muck it up. Even so, I can't stand Burton in films. I'd rather see an Edy Williams monstrosity than watch the over-theatrical Burton. Anyway, now the cast is more top-heavy than the number of producers of this film (four!). I mean, can you imagine Burton playing second fiddle to Big Brother...?

Cheeky Swine!

Mark Sobel's computerology thriller, *Access Code* with Martin Landau, had the hype-line "We're Watching You" on its ads, until the day after the Burton news. Then, what do you know, the hype read: Big Brother is Watching You. Burton must still have some impact, after all.

Meanwhile...

...back in the real world, good news and bad. First, young Hollywood comic Andy Kaufman, star of the badly — if ever — released Allan Arkush film, *Heartbeeps*, died of lung cancer (though he was no smoker) on May 16... Three days later, Michael Powell, 79, director of *Peeping Tom* (1960) among other British classics, married his pal Martin Scorsese's editor Thelma Schoonmaker in Britain.

Off and Running

The good news from the Swedish VTC video folk is that Roger Christian was all systems go to start 2084 (see *Starburst 69* interview) down-under on July 25. Set, as the VTC release didn't really need to point out "a hundred years in the future" (no, really?), Ro-



Above: The face of 1984. Below: The voluptuous Caroline Munro, soon to be seen in Derek Ford's horror *Don't Open Until Christmas*.



ger's movie studies an Orwellian world in the desert planet of Odessa, controlled by unscrupulous mercenary Jovitt. Our hero tackling him is Lorca, aided by Kid, a more human than mechanicalised droid. Roger, who knows a thing or two about sets (hence his *Star Wars* Oscar) is shooting around Sydney and in Western Australian mining areas — "some of the most staggering locations imaginable, you'll really have the feel of having gone to another planet."

Roger's producer on the project is Michael Guest, previously concerned with Skolimowski's *Moonlighting* and Tony Richardson's *Hotel New Hampshire*.

Cannes Chatter

Sam Raimi was missing for the first time in two years. With reason. He's begun *Evil Dead II*, aka *Evil Dead and The Army of Darkness*. Bruce Campbell stars. Well, he was the survivor... Stephen Woolley, I understand, has bought it already for Palace, win, lose or draw that damned video-nasty cast about *Evil Dead*. Steve's also picked up *Blood Simple* from Sam's Big Apple mates... Wolfgang Peterson, director of *The Boat* and *The Never Ending Story* (photo-preview real soon, that's a promise) has taken over making the big Fox sf film, *Enemy Mine*, from original director Richard Loncraine after, yeah, yeah, the usual "creative differences". Cast stays firm: Dennis (Jaws II/Right Stuff) Quaid and Oscar-winner Lou Gossett... Glenn Robinson, veteran Hollywood SPFXer, supplied the monsters for Herman Cardenes' *Island Claw*. Better if he'd provided the actors, too... Italy's top sf comic-strip, *RanXerox*, by Liberatore and Tamburini, definitely moving as a movie now with director Andrzej Zulawski, the Pole who made *Possession* with a Carlo Rambaldi thingle (no, Mandy, I don't mean Isabel Adjani!) and this year's scandal hit, *The Public Woman*. Or pubic... Anything Edward Galt can muck up, Cannon can do better? They're re-making H. Rider Haggard too, *King Solomon's Mines*, with Richard Chamberlain in Stewart Granger's 1950 re-make role. Sorry, but like Mel Gibson's *The Bounty*, a thrice-told tale is once too often... While Nastassja Kinski recovers great form in three newbies debuting at Cannes, her dad is back with the low budgeters in *Titan Find*, William Malone's mix of *Alien* and *Space Vampires* (which, come to think of it, Klaus Kinski was billed to star in some years ago)... Dan O'Bannon has scripted *Blade Runner* author Philip K. Dick's *Screamers* for producer Chuck Fries... David Cronenberg to make *Total Recall* for Dino De La Pina... Caroline Munro writhes again in Derek Ford's horror, *Don't Open Until Christmas*, co-starring and directed by actor Edmund Purdom. Didn't even know he was still alive, let alone around... One outfit

named, or initialled FCI, Cannes-screened all their cans, stuff with real turn-on titles like *The Ark of the Sun* God (with David Warbeck, who else?) *Violated, Assassination and ...* End Blyton's *The Famous Five*

Santa's Little Helpers

London producer Timothy Burrill mentioned he had his own plane at Cannes this year. Not at Nice airport to assist any necessary speedy return to Pinewood. He meant a plane carrying his name on a huge banner—one of the by now annual Salkind air-force sweeping above the Croisette in lunchtime sorties to make sure none of us forget that the next Salkind endeavour is *Santa Claus*. At \$50 million, it's going to be the most expensive Christmas gift of 1985.

Shooting of effects, tests and allegedly "certain key scenes" for the movie began as long ago as last Christmas and another Salkind air-force, choppers this time, are due around the North Pole shortly to collect background plates for the ongoing SPFX work at Pinewood. (Yes, Pinewood! Forget all those headlined complaints that Thatcher's boys have made it impossible for the Salkinds to stay in production in Britain. "We'll never quit Pinewood," says Alexander Salkind.

For some time, of course, we've known that Dudley Moore has been signed for the film. He's played Santa's No 1 elf, Patch, for a cool five million bucks. At Cannes, the news broke that the *Supergirl* director, Jeannot Szwarc, will handle the new project. "This is the subject I've been waiting for all my life," he said; as you'd expect him to say. "I think the magic of the myth will touch the hearts of people the world over and bring out the child in every one of us."

Alex Salkind describes *Santa* as "a relief from our super films." Not that they've finished with them. With a sweet smile of success, he added, "We can always return to *Superman IV* or a new *Supergirl*, or even *Son of Santa Claus*—but after *Santa Claus*."

So who's playing Santa? Not Chris Reeve in a white beard, that's for sure. He made that clear during his quick flip over for *The Bostonians* film which closed the Director's Fortnight. He's not interested in *Superman IV*, either. Anyway, Chris is not old enough for the role. "Although this is telling of the universal fairy tale," comments Alex Salkind, "Santa himself, must not be too old. He starts the film at a mere 45, although he ages somewhat in the course of the story," I bet.

When you come down to it, there's one man only for the role. It'd be typecasting, of course. But who better to play Santa than Santa himself. George Lucas.

Exit: She

Not so sure about Jeff's backers. They

prove to be Eduard Sarlui and Continental Motion Pictures, which peddle more genre tit 'n' tat than even Cannon used to wallow in five years ago. For example, I finally caught their *She* film this trip. It's not so much H. Rider Haggard anymore. Simply haggard! The classic old yarn of Ayesha, She Who Must Be Obeyed, even as simplified by Hammer's odes to Ursula Andress (sigh!) and the wondrous Czech-mate, Olinka Berova (deep

sigh!), is wholly unrecognisable here. It's all switched into a post-apocalyptic situation. But never switched on. The result is ab-so-lutely farcical! The sound you're hearing is poor Rider Haggard spinning in his tomb...

In the title role, Sandahl Berman—Conan's ex-Valeria—gives her not inconsiderable all, I must say. She wins The Things Medallion for performing heroically over and beyond the call of duty or, I suspect, booty. She appears

to be the only one on the set who either believes in the project or is simply professional enough to act as if she does. She, alone, though, cannot save this infantile travesty directed by the scenarist Avi Nesher. He should be roped to a chair and made to watch his film non-stop on a bank of monitors for a month and then be handed over to the men in white coats. He's packed the mess with people like Harrison (hah!) Muller, star of the same combine's 2020 *Texas Gladiators*. I got the impression that the cast—men and women both—were American football players, too punchy to turn out last season. The added fact that the movie's score comes from The Bastard Group tends to sum up this enterprise. If they'd penned some songs, it'd make a great panto.

Conan with a Gun

The Big C for Conan has turned into a seemingly indestructible bigger C for cyborg. That's Arnold Schwarzenegger's new role in *Terminator*, written by producer Gale Hurd and director James Cameron. Arnie's cyborg is sent to Earth now from the future to terminate poor Linda Hamilton, as if she hasn't suffered enough in *Children of the Corn*. Why the hit? Sometime in her own future, Linda will have a son who will, in his future, lead the human residue from the next atomic war against a computer-controlled machine army that sees the human race as being obsolete. If they can get his Mama before he's born, all be well. For them!

Fear not for Linda. She's body-guarded by another time-tripper, Michael Biehn, sent back in time to drop a wrench in the cyborg's mission. Or in the cyborg, itself. Okay, so seconds out—in the blue corner, future man—in the red corner, future robot. May the best machine win!

Stunts Galore

The day the 37th Cannes festival closed, *Indiana Jones* and *The Temple of Doom* opened in America and went through the roof—naturally. Censor-hashed in Britain or not, it's chockful of terrifying stunts. "Hardest one of all," says Harrison Ford, "was keeping the hat on. They used carpet tacks!" I know well when the film opened because I was—eat your hearts out—stuck on a Cannes beach in the finally returning sun because a rail strike delayed my return to Paris by a day. (A likely story—Ed.) I returned, I might add in true Indy style. My suit-case, stuffed to bursting point with Cannes documentation, Press kits, photos, notes, tapes, slipped my grasp and tumbled dink-donk-dunk! into a Paris escalator and exploded Press kits, photos, notes and tapes like acid rain... So I think this month's column is as accurate as usual.



Above: Conan meets Mad Max! The publicity art for a new Sandahl Berman vehicle, based very loosely, on H. Rider Haggard's classic novel, and featuring music by The Bastard Group! Below: Willie Scott and Short Round fall through the floor of a rope bridge as takings for *Indiana Jones* and the *Temple of Doom* rocket through the roof!



Starburst Review Section

STAR TREK III— THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK

*"There are no surprises
on this journey to the
final frontier".*

*A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones*

They find him! Right, now that's out of the way it's down to the business of explaining exactly why this sequel to *The Wrath of Khan* is such a disappointment.

Any film structured around the absence of one of its major characters is bound to suffer dramatically. Add that to the fact that Leonard Nimoy is in the director's chair this time out and its failure is easy to understand. *Star Trek III* is so solemn and reverent concerning the Spock persona to the detriment of its other fine merits. This self-evident empathy, leaves a lot to be desired and becomes pretentious, although I must admit that the TV show philosophy does come over stronger here than in the two previous outings. *Star Trek III* is nothing more than a lot of character studies revolving around the qualities of friendship and commitment.

Sorry "Trekkers" but you need a lot more than that to make a film work in the 1980s.

Taking its premise from the first show of the third television series, *Spock's Brain*, *Star Trek III* starts well with a recap of the Vulcan's final moments on board the Enterprise. But its prime concerns are mainly stopping Klingon warlord Kruge take possession of the Genesis project which he views as the ultimate secret weapon and the transference of Spock's knowledge from Bones' mind into the rapidly ageing Vulcan body due to the project being a disaster.

There are no real surprises along this journey to the final frontier. One concerning Kirk's son is thrown away, victim of the over funereal tone permeating every second of the film. The major talking point though, I suspect, will be the fate of the Starship Enterprise which will probably send ardent fans into paroxysms of rage as it is put to rest to make way for the Excelsior in Part 4.

Star Trek III's major trump card is once again the superb craftsmanship of the ILM special effects. After the very rough matte and model work on show in *Indiana Jones*, they emerge here



Above: The main characters of *Star Trek III—The Search for Spock* pose for the camera, without director / title star Leonard Nimoy. Below: Saavik (this time played by Robin Curtis) and two Enterprise crew members view the scanner.



back on top form. In these days of over familiarity with anything even remotely cinematically space-age, the visual treats here supply the wonderment and emotional charge missing from the script. The Klingon battleship emanating from behind its cloak of darkness or the docking of the Enterprise in a future-tech Earthport are feats of amazing virtuosity — all well showcased by another fine score by James

Horne. These are the true jewels in the somewhat tarnished crown.

There is no getting away from it though. *Star Trek II* is downright ponderous at times with evident cutting to speed up the relatively short running time. It also lacks a full blooded villain in the mould of Khan and is sadly predictable from start to finish. Did anyone ever really doubt that the search for Spock would end

anything less than happily? Lumbered with a pseudo-mystical ending and a devastating last line, why couldn't anyone see the sense in making Spock's resurrection just a part of this pulp entertainment and not the sum total?

As Nichelle Nichols says at one point though, "This isn't real. This is just a fantasy". I actually wondered about that this time round I'm afraid. ■

ROMANCING THE STONE

"Anyone who enjoyed *Raiders of the Lost Ark* will get a big kick out of this, too."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

While *Romancing the Stone* is thematic fantasy rather than being an all-out genre film by definition, I'm sure I'm going to get slapped off for reviewing it within these pages. But honestly, anyone who liked *Raiders of the Lost Ark* will get a big kick out of this movie, too.

Romancing the Stone has a lighter touch than *Raiders* but it is just as romantic and jam packed full of unexpected twists and turns.

When a Barbara Cartland type novelist, played by Kathleen Turner of *Body Heat* fame, receives a treasure map through the post, it is just ahead of a phone call telling her that her kidnapped sister will die unless she delivers it personally to Colombia. Staggering in

high heels through the jungle after one of the many attempts on her life, she meets Michael Douglas who looks set to transform her life into something along the lines of a plot from one of her own novels.

From an unwilling helper he becomes enamoured with the fabulous emerald that lies at the end of the treasure hunt and both decide to use this bounty to their advantage. This is, of course, only the beginning of their problems but director Robert Zemeckis, another alumnus of Mr Spielberg, keeps the whole convoluted plot moving along at such breakneck speed that you don't have a moment to relax and notice how ridiculous it all is. Full of wit and intelligence, (some would say, "How on earth did it ever get made?"), *Romancing the Stone* is the best kind of escapism fun with special effects occurring always when you are least expecting them.

Writer Diane Thomas reportedly got 1/4 million dollars for her screenplay and, while I'm sure some of the quirkiness in the final product must bear Zemeckis' trademark, she deserves every penny for crafting a motion picture totally devoid of cliché which one can only term truly unusual.



Above: Joan Wilder (Kathleen Turner) and Jack Colton (Michael Douglas) search for buried treasure in the jungles of South America. Below: The sinister Zolo (Manuel Ojeda) and his goons.



SUPERGIRL

"Sounding the death-knell for this money-spinning comic book series."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Is it a bird? Yes, as it happens, it is! *Supergirl* is a turkey of such epic proportions, I feel like leaving this review at that and not wasting my time or yours by going on further. But the stunning wrong-headed banality of this latest Salkind offering is going to sound the death knell for this money-spinning comic book series. So fasten

your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy flight – almost as bad as the visibly wired ones poor old Helen Slater as Supergirl is put through.

No other mega-budget movie in recent memory has so much stacked against it from the start. The tiresome plot, such as it is, is a thinly veiled re-working of *Snow White* pitting Argo City's answer to The Flying Nun against a second rate fortune-teller for the undying affections of a hunky landscape gardener. I kid you not! Sorceress Selena's power comes from a stray Omegahedron that Supergirl has to recover to save her hometown from destruction.

While remaining remarkably faithful to the true genesis of Clark Kent's long lost cousin, *Supergirl* is doomed by a humourless script from David (The

Dark Crystal) Odell. All told, it's a charmless exercise riddled with illogical motivation and very sloppy storytelling. Treated as high camp, *Supergirl* may just manage to pass muster. But it never really goes over the top enough to warrant that description.

Then there's the actor factor! Never have so many been wasted by so little. I make no apologies for the following list of character assassinations: Peter O'Toole hams it up outrageously as Zaltar, the leader responsible for turning Argo City into, well... an Argos discount showroom, just by waving his silly Matterwand, starting all the trouble in the first place. At least John Gielgud waited until he was an old-aged pensioner before appearing in throwaway cameo roles. Faye Dunaway is all tepid fire and brimstone as Selena, a role which could well challenge *Mommie Dearest* as the nadir of her career – if that seems at all possible. As her sidekick Bianca, Brenda Vaccaro indulges in some wise cracks so unfunny, she would have been wiser not to have cracked them at all. Hart Bochner is the focus of this needless female attention and he is saddled with some impossible pseudo-Shakespearean lines. It isn't really his fault that he emerges as a right wally. And as for Helen Slater, the less said the better, as she struggles in a vacuum, looking like a fresh-faced Catherine Deneuve in her Kara/Supergirl part and a Kate Nelligan look-alike when she adopts her earthly persona of Linda Lee. (Rumour has it, she was dubbed as well). Mia Farrow and Simon Ward scarcely have two lines between them as Supergirl's parents.

But the worst miscalculation of all comes from Peter Cook as Selena's former henchman. Embarrassing isn't the word! Watching him, once again, trying to break into the American Market in an effort to follow his former partner's footsteps has all the charm of viewing a cancer operation.

With a strong directorial hand behind *Supergirl*, some of its twee intentions might have been salvaged. But it looks like Jeannot Szwarc has been predictably overwhelmed by the financially controlling side of the production. It is his most anonymous film to date.

The tacky studio bound sets are matched well by the grainy unconvincing special effects which look like leftovers from every imaginative film in this post *Star Wars* era. Apart from the visible wires every time a flying stunt occurs (Zoran Perisic – where are you now?), Roy Field and Derek Meddings' work has a tired, uninvolved feel about it. The climactic appearance of a gigantic hellish demon (looking suspiciously like the Rancor Monster in *Return of the Jedi*) only confirms my theory that meshing the occult with Superpower mythology is a marriage destined for the rocks.

I could go on. But by now I think you've got the point. Warner Brothers wisely passed on releasing this film worldwide for reasons that are now only too apparent. I must admit word had filtered back through the grapevine about how bad *Supergirl* supposedly was. But not only did *Supergirl* confirm my worst expectations – it exceeded them to a degree I thought would never be possible.



In an effort to keep all you glazed video viewers glued to this column, occasionally I try to find novel and different ways to "break up" the text – ie, rather than just a mixed bag of reviews I cover, say, all available videos which feature scenes in which Sybil Danning undresses. Or videos in which John Carradine undresses.

Anyway, here's our latest innovation: The entire genre output (and then some!) of just one company – and what better company to start with than that Godsend to genre fans – Videomedia?

KEEPING GOOD COMPANY

Now, any company that can boast Polanski's *Repulsion* and *Cul-De-Sac*, Argento's *Bird With The Crystal Plumage* and *Tenebrae* and Bava's *Black Sunday* can fairly be said to be playing a good hand. And if I don't elaborate on the virtues of these excellent movies in this article, it's only because I've done so on previous occasions. (I'll just remind you that *Repulsion* is, along with *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom*, the cinema's most subtle, sharply observed and terrifying portrait of a dangerously disordered mind, and quite possibly Polanski's most riveting film.)

The Argentos, of course, will be familiar to *Starburst* readers and need no recommendation here (one reader took me to task for saying that *Suspiria* deserved the description of Argento's finest film, claiming *Tenebrae* as such – but you can make up your own minds!).

Other goodies in the Videomedia bag include (while still on the subject of Italian terror) Riccardo Freda's *Terror of Dr Hichcock* (that's Freda's spelling) with the incandescent Barbara Steele – also to be seen, of course, in the same company's *Black Sunday*. Freda's film is visually hypnotic, if a little uneventful for modern tastes (particularly in this shortened version). There's also an oddity called *Cemetery of the Living Dead* which together with Sewell's *Curse of the Crimson Altar* completes a quartet of Barbara Steele chillers. This turns out to be a black-and-white film by Massimo Pupillo called *Cinque Tombe Per Un Medium* and has a certain stylistic strikingness – but is otherwise unremarkable.

A very interesting item is *A Study in Terror*, James Hill's gripping account of an apocryphal dash between Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper. Yes, it's the same theme as the later *Murder By Decree*, but here handled with more grisly panache (if less political sophistication). John Neville makes a virile and youthful Holmes, with Donald Houston a solid Watson.

Fulci's *House By the Cemetery* is, of course, one for admirers of this controversial director – not among his most audacious efforts, but well up to par – if you can take it!

Eugene Martin you may know from

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by Barry Forshaw



The furry features of Peter Mayhew as Chewbacca the wookiee as he appears in SPFX. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox).



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1. SPFX: The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)
2. War of the Worlds (CIC)
3. The Brood (Intervision)
4. Dark Night of the Scarecrow (Video Unlimited)
5. Zardoz (CBS/Fox)

PITS

1. The Next One (Filmtown)
2. Wavelength (Medusa)
3. Invaders of the Lost Gold (A1)
4. The Loch Ness Horror (Videofarm)
5. Castle of Evil (Videofarm)

his pseudonymous effort as director, *Horror Express*, a lively horror comic not matched by his Videomedia release, *A Candle For the Devil* – a Judy Geeson starrer about sexual repression which never really takes off. Ditto *Curse of the Crimson Altar* (director Vernon Sewell) despite the presence of Barbara Steele. Things look up with Fulci's imaginative *The Beyond* and an entry in Videomedia's Spectacular series, the epic *Ulysses* (director Mario Camerini) with Kirk Douglas excellent as ever in a vivid, colourful re-telling of Homer. High marks also for *The Creeping Flesh* (with Cushing and Lee) – Freddie Francis at his macabre best in a genuinely chilling effort. Lee appears in Mastrocinque's *Crypt of Horror*, a black-and-white chiller not connected (despite its title) with the 50s comics. And a final mention of Norman J. Warren's *Prey*, with its lively shape-shifting alien. Videomedia, of course, carry many other excellent mainstream titles – better stocked video stores will carry these.

GOING UP!

Now, three from Warner Bros that can be safely recommended. First, the Dutch techno-thriller *The Lift* directed by Dick Maas. As has been observed, this comes across as a cinema version of one of Stephen King's tales in which an inanimate object begins decimating human beings. Here, the malevolent lift of the title is brilliantly characterised as a playfully murderous intelligence that only a dogged lift engineer sent to service it (after the near-suffocation of some drunken guests) can finally confront.

From the very first shot of the sinister device of the title, as it heaves into sight, irradiated with very Argento-like hues, it's clear that Maas is a stylist – and he's largely able to keep us gripped throughout, with the exception of some slack sections midway through the film. As a bonus, some attention is given to fleshing out his working class hero, whose marriage collapses under the strain of his growing obsession with the increasing body count of the enigmatic killer.

There's some fashionable conspiracy theory tactics woven into the plot, but I'll add no more other than to commend *The Lift* to you – it's a refreshingly sharp piece of work, the occasional flat moment (and usual inadequate dubbing) notwithstanding.

KILLER DILLER

The second Warner Bros winner is *Angel of Vengeance* (known in the States as *Ms 45*), and it's a real find – a kind of distaff *Death Wish* made with both style and visual imagination, and starring Zoe Tamerlis as a mute girl who repays violent assault with handgun retribution – a retribution that eventually threatens to engulf any male who crosses her path.

Ms Tamerlis has a Nastassja Kinski-like limpid beauty, and the intensity of her performance matches that of Catherine Deneuve's in Polanski's *Repulsion* (another clear model for this film, with a similar portrait of a disturbed girl slipping further and further into psychosis through the unwanted attentions of men.)

Watching the impeccable heroine of Abel Ferrara's harrowing movie decimate the uniformly unpleasant male characters she encounters has a curious significance for the male viewer – the effect is sobering and thought-provoking in a way that male-hating feminist tracts by women often aren't. Too often, it's easy to rationalise the impulses behind the latter, but when male film-makers paint such a dispiriting portrait of their own sex, such conclusions are less straightforward.

It's also to Ferrara's credit that, unlike much feminist fiction (in which the men are invariably as obnoxious as in *Angel of Vengeance* but the women usually ennobled by their consciousness-raising suffering), the director is here able to criticize his heroine's actions – as in the scene where a relatively innocent young male Chinese is about to be gunned down for kissing his girlfriend.

Ferrara has made a quantum leap in directorial technique since the shoddy *Driller Killer* (which I criticize, of course, as a bad movie, rather than from the moral majority standpoint) and produced a tense and fully achieved thriller.

TAUT THRILLER

And thirdly: To the list of young directors whose style is heavily influenced by the late and lamented Alfred Hitchcock (most successful of whom is Brian De Palma) can now be added the name of the talented Jonathan Demme. The third of Warner Bros' recent batch of fine movies is his *Last Embrace*, a powerful thriller that combines elements of the Master's three greatest movies, *Vertigo*, *Psycho* and *North by Northwest*.

Roy Scheider is excellent as an intelligence agent coming apart at the seams (like James Stewart's character in *Vertigo*) and who becomes involved in a murky, convoluted plot involving the murder of several apparently unrelated individuals. Janet Margolin is the girl who may not be all she appears to be, and Scheider's existence is threatened in several virtuoso suspense set pieces – a vertiginous bell-tower sequence – inspired by guess what movie? – and a nail-biting climax at Niagara Falls.) Demme acquires himself admirably as a disciple of Britain's greatest director, and the occasional lapse in logic is more than forgivable – particularly as Miklos Rozsa's lush, dramatic score keeps all the elements tightly together.

CULT COME-ON

Don't be tempted by the "Come-on" packaging and title of *Massacre at Central High* (Merlin) – it's by no means as pacily violent as the advertising copy intimates, and – more germane to readers of this magazine – the horror elements are minimal. A routine tale of a quiet *Shane*-like student who ultimately decimates the college "Little Gestapo", it passes the time undemandingly enough till the final reel. Then, with almost stupefying unreality every put-upon student in the college transforms, Jekyll and Hyde-style into carbon copies of their bullying oppressors – and all is resolved in an even more credibility-shattering orgy of death. But you'll be totally bemused by then. The director is Renee Daalder – and I should point out that this film has been included in the new book *Cult Movies 2* (as has *Angel of Vengeance*, reviewed earlier).

FROGGING A DEAD HORSE

The first major appearance of the "Revenge of Nature" ideas was, of course, Hitchcock's *The Birds*; in George McCowan's *Frogs* (Guild) it isn't, surprisingly enough, the title creatures that wreak havoc (except for the death of unsympathetic tycoon Ray Milland), but various denizens of the reptile kingdom. This is probably because

McCowan (unlike the hapless makers of the appalling *Night of the Lepus*, with their giant bunnies) realised that frogs are just not sinister (think of that Quartz ad!), while snakes, etc. . .

Efficiently made ecological horror thriller.

ANDERSON AGAIN

Michael Anderson's track record in directing genre films (the dull *Logan's Run*, the woeful *Doc Savage*) didn't inspire high hopes for *Dominique* (Guild) – and, regrettably, one's worst fears are realised. A mechanically-crafted *Diaboliques* rip-off (not, for once, scripted by Jimmy Sangster!), Cliff Robertson and Jean Simmons play out the usual "let's drive wife/husband mad" shenanigans without conviction. Despite all its miscalculation with Hackman's camp Luthor, one is still glad Anderson cried off directing *Superman*!

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

The SF epic *Metalstorm* appears from Entertainment in Video and Jack Arnold's classic *Creature from the Black Lagoon* from CIC. From Rank, *The Last Child* and from Thorn EMI: *Amityville III* and *Rotweiler: The Dogs of Hell*. Brent Walker Video has the lively *House that Dripped Blood*, and Videofarm has Cottafavi's cult movie *Hercules Conquers Atlantis*. But the real events are from RCA: *Speciehunter* and *Christine*.

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer barry forshaw

The Horror of Frankenstein (Thorn EMI) was the lowest point in the Hammer cycle; Jimmy Sangster's cod re-write of his marvellous original script labours mercifully the black comic elements so well judged in Fisher's *Curse of Frankenstein*; Ralph Bates and Dave Prowse do little to erase memories of Cushing and Lee.

It's a minor tragedy that John Boorman's long-cherished Arthurian project *Excalibur* (Warner Video) should end up such a plodding earth-bound affair. Despite splendid chunks of Wagner and Carl Orff on the soundtrack, Boorman's banal script never reaches the heroic aspects it aspires to, and the acting ranges from the bizarre (Nicol Williamson's over-the-top Merlin) to the inexperienced (Nigel Terry's Arthur, sadly un-kingly in the latter half of the film).

It's amazing that after twenty odd years Hitchcock's *Psycho* is still spawning imitations like *Unhinged* (Avatar Video) – and it's even more amazing that so few of them are anything other than utter trash. *Unhinged* is no exception – its only unusual feature is surely the most clumsily handled double identity dénouement in the whole cycle. Come back, Sir Alfred!

It's very much a matter of the amount of charity you feel towards a particular film that determines your response to it. For instance, with *Hangar 18* (Videofarm), you might groan and say, "Good grief, not another low-budget rip-off of *Capricorn One* and *Close Encounters* (with a liberal dose of *Chariots of the Gods*); or you might lean back in your armchair, Diet Pepsi in hand, and say "OK – TV movie budget, but the director (James L. Conway) has handled it efficiently, with some pleasing moments – the investigation of a captured alien spacecraft, a suspenseful finale. And Robert Vaughn does again what he always does so superbly – the oily, corrupt politico..." I wouldn't dream of trying to predict which of these would be your response.

What strikes one most about *The Scars of Dracula* (Thorn EMI) is Christopher Lee's perfect embodiment of the urbane menace of Dracula; here, at the dog-end of the Hammer cycle, those moments when he displays his icy courtesy as fatal host to the film's cipher-like characters (including a pre-*Minder* Dennis Waterman) are virtually all the film has to offer. Roy Ward Baker orchestrates a lively finale, however.



Keith Gordon and Alexandra Paul, the young stars of *Christine* (released on video by RCA).

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It's always good to see talented new writers emerging on publishers' lists, even if that talent is raw. So I'll give a qualified welcome to Peter Beere, whose first two novels *Urban Prey* and *The Crucifixion Squad* (Arrow, £1.75 each) begin a series under the general title of *Trauma 2020*. Beere is undoubtedly an author with potential, but any praise must be tempered by distinct qualms about the emphasis in his writing.

The two books follow the adventures of Beekay Howard in a near-future London where things are falling apart. About three-quarters of the population is unemployed, the government is brutal and everyone seems to live in squalor or fear of their lives. Beekay narrates his own story, and he emerges as a droll, engaging character, who, in his efforts to avoid being drafted into the army, is hunted by a man, seemingly indestructible assassin called Homer. The frightened Beekay lurches from one crisis to the next, being shot at, imprisoned, tortured and generally leaving a trail of dead bodies in his wake.

These books are not for the squeamish. When people get shot or killed – and they often do – they have a tendency to spurt their innards all over the place. The author indulges far too much in detailed descriptions of erupting brains and gushing veins with the result that the better virtues of his story are going to be wasted on a lot of readers who will simply throw the books away in disgust. This is a pity, for under the crude facade lurks a story which seeks to affirm human values of loyalty, trust and love. There's real ability, too, the author having a natural style which is loose yet fluent. The laws of grammar are only loosely adhered to, but this is in keeping with the fact that Beekay has not had much formal education and is telling his story in a conversational manner.

I was constantly torn between appreciation and dislike for these books. The grim, seedy atmosphere of Beekay's decaying London is well conveyed, and while the female characters play subordinate roles, they also emerge as strong individuals. Beere has a nice line in metaphors, describing a dilapidated building as "about as cheerful as a gassed-out badger set", and both books are filled with wry observations and black humour which are at odds with some of the cheaper and nastier aspects of the story. But there's a lack of discipline, as when Beekay uses words like "aphotic", "inispissated" and "acuminates" which are scarcely the vocabulary of an uneducated man. This is the author's own voice intruding. Overall, what we have here is talent being misdirected on subject matter not worthy of the imagination behind it. Beere is the kind of writer who would be ruined by too much delicacy and control, but he needs to tone down the violence in his work if

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles



he's not to be dismissed as a cynical hack producing the literary equivalent of video nasties.

The Neverending Story by Michael

Ende (Penguin, £4.95) is in some respects the complete antithesis of Beere's books in that it eschews explicit violence and displays the most re-

fin'd sensibilities. It also lacks vigour. A young boy, Bastian, is literally transported into the magical realm of Fantastica where he becomes a hero who is instrumental in saving the realm from destruction. First published in West Germany and already a best-seller practically everywhere, this book was originally written as a children's novel but has appealed to adults everywhere, no doubt because it addresses child-like longings in all of us. It's a novel not only about the power of the imagination but also about the necessity of fantasy to the human mind – Bastian has to believe in the reality of Fantastica before he can actually cross into the realm.

The result is an artfully constructed story by a writer who takes pains with his prose, and the tale is populated by all sorts of weird and wonderful characters from rock-eaters to technicolour lions. But while it's inventive and well-wrought, it seemed to me to be lacking in imagination in its truest sense. Bastian and various other characters have all sorts of strange adventures, but as a reader I had very little sense of actually inhabiting their world myself; the story is reported rather than brought alive for the reader so that at times it was like reading a synopsis of the real adventure. Possibly this is a fault of the translation, but it's more likely that Michael Ende is the kind who achieves his effects through diligence rather than inspiration. *The Neverending Story* is a serious, worthy book, but it's more artifice than art. Perhaps the forthcoming film will succeed in conveying some of the magic that I think is missing here.

By far the best novel, *Lanark*, was a complex, imaginative work, interweaving two stories of a real Glasgow and its bizarre counterpart, Uthark. This new novel is less ambitious but more successful on its own terms. Most of it takes place inside the head of a drunk-in insomnia who is passing the night hours in a Scottish hotel room by reminiscing on his past and having masochistic sexual fantasies. This may sound depressing and depraved, but it's neither, for the whole story is enlivened by the vigorous and humane imagination at the height of his powers. *Lanark* was like a bracing whiff of fresh air through the stale canons of British literature, and *1982 Janine* is a worthy successor to that book.

A Maze of Death by Philip K. Dick (Granada, £1.50) is a 1970 novel making its first appearance in paperback. It tells of fourteen people who are sent as colonists to a new planet and who quickly realize that something funny is going on. With Dick you can never take reality for granted, and the twist ending suitably surprised me even if it seemed more appropriate to a short story than a novel. This is not one of Dick's most ambitious books, but he's more stimulating than most SF writers even when not at his very best.

I was sorting through the questions I would answer for this month's column (with a pitch-fork – I get so many these days!) and I noticed that many of you have a keen thirst for fore-knowledge of film projects and tv company scheduling. I'd like to take this opportunity to say that *Starburst Data Bank* does not deal in Things to Come. I leave that to the great Tony Crawley and his news column. Here, we deal with info on films and tv shows of the past and present. So, sorry, if you want to know what Harrison Ford's next film will be, or whether the BBC plans to re-screen *The Outer Limits*, either check through *Things to Come* or – in the case of the tv companies – write to the people concerned.

And I have a message for all those readers who want to be film directors/special effects technicians/makeup artists. No, I don't know how you can get into the film industry. If I did know, I'd be busy becoming a super-star myself!

But enough wingeing from me. Let's get on to the meat of this month's column...

THE LIFE OF LIONEL

Vaughan Taylor of Bexhill, East Sussex kicks off with this one. "What can you tell me about the career of Lionel Atwill and can you list all the films in which he appeared?"

Sure can, Vaughan! Atwill was born in Croydon, England on 1st March, 1885. He attended Mercer's School in London and had a succession of private tutors (his folks were pretty well fixed, it seems). His dad was an architect and for a while young Lionel made something of a living in this trade. But like so many, he found the enticements of the theatre too much and at the tender age of 19 (that's in 1904 for those of you bad at maths) he leapt into a theatrical career. He did all right and after a few years in rep he found himself touring Australia with a theatre company (1910-1912). Back on the boards in England, he was lured by no less than the great Lily Langtry to try his luck in the good ol' USA in 1915. Lionel's luck was running and he proved a hit on Broadway, appearing alongside the likes of Langtry, Helen Hayes, Katherine Cornell and the legendary Nazimova.

His forays into silent films, like so many "respectable" actors, were considered something of an alternative to his stage work, but once movies took a grip, Atwill was won over. And so to all the films of Lionel Atwill... *Eve's Daughter* (1918) *For Sale* ('18) *The Marriage Price* ('19) *The Highest Bidder* ('21) *Indiscretion* ('21) Lionel Atwill in *The Actor's Advice to His Son* ('28 and a short) *The White Faced Fool* ('28) *Silent Witness* ('32) *Doctor X* ('32) *The Vampire Bat* ('33) *Secret of Madame Blanche* ('33) *Mystery of the Wax Museum* ('33) *Murders in the Zoo* ('33) *The Sphinx* ('33) *The Song of Songs*

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

Guant but not forgotten. The lean features of Lionel Atwill as he appeared in Mystery of the Wax Museum (1933)



('33) *Solitaire Man* ('33) *Secret of the Blue Room* ('33) *Beggars in Ermine* ('34) *Nana* ('34) *Stamboul Quest* ('34) *One More River* ('34) *Age of Innocence* ('34) *The Firebird* ('34) *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head* ('34) *Mark of the Vampire* ('35) *Devil is a Woman* ('35) *Murder Man* ('35) *Rendezvous* ('35) *Captain Blood* ('35) *Lady of Secrets* ('36) *Absolute Quiet* ('36) *Till We Meet Again* ('36) *The High Command* ('37) *The Road Back* ('37) *Last Train From Madrid* ('37) *Lancer Spy* ('37) *The Wrong Road* ('37) *The Great Garrick* ('37) *Three Comrades* ('38) *The Great Waltz* ('38) *Son Of Frankenstein* ('39) *The Three Musketeers* ('39) *The Hound of the Baskervilles* ('39) *The Mad Empress* ('39) *The Gorilla* ('39) *The Sun Never Sets* ('39) *Mr Moto Takes A Vacation* ('39) *Secret of Dr Kildare* ('39) *Balalaika* ('39) *Charlie Chan in Panama* ('40) *Johnny Apollo* ('40) *Charlie Chan's Murder Case* ('40) *The Girl in 313* ('40) *Boom Town* ('40) *The Great Profile* ('40) *Man Made Monster* ('41) *Junior G-Men of the Air* ('42, serial) *Ghost of Frankenstein* ('42) *To Be or Not To Be* ('42) *Strange Case of Doctor RX* ('42) *Pardon My Sarong* ('42) *Cairo* ('42) *Night Monster* ('42) *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* ('42) *Mad Doctor of Market Street* ('42) *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* ('43) *Captain America* ('44, serial) *Lady in the Death House* ('44) *Raiders of Ghost City* ('44, serial) *Secrets of Scotland Yard* ('44) *House of Frankenstein* ('45) *Fog Island* ('45) *Crime, Inc* ('45) *House of Dracula* ('45) *Genius at Work* ('46) and finally, *Lost City of the Jungle* ('46, serial).

During the shooting of the last listed, Atwill succumbed to pneumonia and died. His scenes were completed by a double (George Sorell) who was photographed from behind. Although Atwill never reached star status in films he proved a reliable and well-liked character actor. Perhaps his best performances were in *Son of Frankenstein* (playing the one-armed copper, Krogh) and the series of Bs he made for Universal during the 40s. Atwill was married four times, once to the former wife of General Douglas MacArthur. His oldest son, John Anthony, was killed during military service while stationed in England with the RAF in 1941. In 1940 Atwill was arrested for showing porno films and reportedly allowing orgies to be held in his home. He was let off when the jury investigating the case found insufficient evidence to bring him to trial. Although the following year he was indicted for perjury in the case, saying at the time, "I lied like a gentleman to protect my friends." Atwill, despite whatever predilections he may have had, was nothing if not a gentleman. He was 61 when he died in 1946. Next!

THE ORIGINAL EMPEROR

Another blast from the past comes from Bill Walters of Edinburgh, who

wants to know something about the original Ming the Merciless, Charles Middleton. Okay Willy Boy, here goes. Middleton was born on 3rd October, 1879 in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. While still in his teens he joined the circus, appearing both under the big top as well as in carnivals and vaudeville. From there he moved into stock theatre and in the late '20s started appearing in small parts in the movies. His first film appears to be *The Farmer's Daughter* in '28. He lent his talents to such features as *Way Out West* (with Laurel and Hardy and the movie that spawned the belated 70s hit song, *Trail of the Lonesome Pine*) *An American Tragedy* ('31) *Pack Up Your Troubles* (again with Stan and Ollie) and found himself at odds with the Marx Bros in *Duck Soup* in 1933. He appeared in his first serial in 1935, *The Miracle Rider*. But it was with *Flash Gordon*, the following year, that Charlie really found his niche playing the evil Emperor of Mongo, Ming the Merciless. Middleton proved a real find for Universal, genuinely becoming the man you love to hate and capturing the essence of Alex Raymond's creation. He reprised the role in *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* ('38) and the somewhat lacklustre *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* ('40). He also appeared in several other serials, usually in a villainous role – *Dick Tracy Returns* ('38) *Daredevils of the Red Circle* ('39) *Perils of Nyoka* ('42) *Batman* ('43) *Black Arrow* ('44) and *Jack Armstrong* ('47). He interspersed this chapter-play work with roles in such diverse features as *Grapes of Wrath*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (as Tom Lincoln) and *Charlie Chan's Murder Cruise* (all 1940). His last film was (appropriately!) *The Last Bandit*, which he made in the year of his death, 1949.

MAX MUZAK!

Marlon Bush of Kent wants info' on the composer of the *Mad Max* films, Brian May. I've been waiting to trot this out for some time! So guess what, kiddo – you win this month's prize. You also get your question answered.

Brian May was born in Adelaide, Australia in 1934 and learnt the piano as a kid. He received further training at Elder Conservatorium in that fair city. He served a stint in the army. While there he got involved with a small brass band for which he tried his hand at arranging. His first work was *I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas* (well, we all gotta start somewhere, I suppose). After finishing his National Service he cornered a job with the ABC (the Oz version of Auntie Beeb) as a musical arranger. A highlight of this period for May was that he got to work with violin virtuoso Yehudi Menuhin. In 1968 he moved to Melbourne where he worked with the ABC Melbourne Dance Band, which under his hand became the Melbourne Showband. They became pretty popular resulting in the release of

several best-selling records.

But it wasn't until 1975 that May got a break in the world of movie scoring, despite some earlier forays with incidental music for ABC children's shows and a couple of cartoons. Director Richard Franklin (who would later direct *Road Games* and *Psycho 2*) had liked May's orchestral arrangements of the music from *Hair* and hired him to score his first feature, *The True Story of Eskimo Nell*. From there, May was on his way. As well as providing the music for several TV shows and mini-series down-under he wrote the scores for *Patrick* ('77) a film which had a rewritten score by Goblin for its Italian release, *Snapshot* ('78) *Mad Max* ('79) *Harlequin* ('79) *Thirst* ('79) *Road Games* ('80) *The Survivor, Nightmares, Race to the Yankee Zephyr, Gallipoli, Mad Max 2, The Killing of Angel Street* (all 1982), *Breakfast in Paris*, *Turkey Shoot* and *Kitty and the*

Bagman (all 1982). As George Miller said of May after the completion of *Mad Max*, "Brian is a remarkable man. Not many people in the world could produce that kind of stuff within the budget we had, and within that time. Brian is the kind of man who is going to make this industry. He is obsessed with his work. Working in a vacuum, hungry for information, determined to produce the best he possibly can." Keep watching *Starburst* for an interview with Brian May.

UNIVERSALLY SCARY

Don Robertson from Ealing wants to know, "What ever happened to the book about Universal horror films called *Universal: The Fright Factory*? I also believe that Lon Chaney Jr wrote a book about himself and his father. Any ideas, Sally?"

Charles Middleton as the original Emperor of Mongo, the deliciously evil-looking Ming the Merciless, from *Flash Gordon*.



Nope to either of them, Don. *Fright Factory* was announced years ago, but to the best of my (superior) knowledge was never actually published. Lon Jnr apparently started the book on himself and his dad, but died before he finished it. There was a book on Chaney Sr some years ago, published by Barnes/Tantivy, but it was a somewhat dreary affair. Good 'ol Forry Ackerman wrote a book on Lon last year, which celebrated the man and his art. Not sure if it ever saw publication though. Certainly Forry never sent me a copy (how about it, 45J7). You'll find a chapter on both the Chaney's in Cal Beck's serviceable *Heroes of the Horrors*. As far as Universal goes, there is the recent *The Universal Story* by Clive Hirschhorn (Octopus), but that covers ALL the Universal films, not just the horrors and SF movies. But never fear, Phil Edwards is (or there, somewhere!) and is busily preparing the first in an ongoing series for *Starburst* called *The All-Studio Guide to Fantasy Films*. The first part is *Universal Fantasy* in which he'll be tracing and tracking down production details and critical comments for nearly 300 movies produced by the studio from the year dot to the present day. So Don-baby, all you gotta do is keep buying *Starburst*!

VAMPIRES IN SPACE!

Barbara Taylor (nice to have one of the ladies write in for a change!) from Lancs wants details of Mario Bava's *Planet of the Vampires*.

Okay, Babs, you got 'em. Magnificent Mario directed the film in 1965 and it was an American/Italian/Spanish and German co-production for American International/Italian International/Castilla/Omnia (phew!). It was basically about a group of space travellers who find themselves stranded on an alien planet invested with ghostly critters hungry for blood and also their bodies. The flick starred Barry Sullivan, Norma Bengelli, Angel Aranda, Evi Marandi and Franco Andrei. Like most of Bava's output, style counted for much more than content and while the film is genuinely creepy at times it borders on the daft, despite the collaboration by Ib Melchior (among others) with Bava on the script. *Planet of the Vampires* (whose alternate titles are *Terrere Nello Spazio* in Italy, *Terror en el Espacio* in Spain, *Planet of Terror*, *Planet of Blood*, *The Demon Planet* for U.S. telly, *Haunted Planet*, *Haunted World*, *Outlawed Planet* and *Planet of the Damned*) is undoubtedly one of the films from which Dan O'Bannon took his inspiration, in particular the discovery of a fossilised alien, for *Alien*. It's a pity that the film doesn't turn up more frequently than it does. It's effective and often scary, and the costumes for the astronauts are tight-fitting black leather – yours truly's favourite attire! See you all next month, and keep the questions flying in. I'll answer them as quickly as possible. TTFN. ■

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